# ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS

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BY

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With Introduction by Stanton Coit, Ph.D.

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# INTRODUCTION

VARIOUS words and phrases have come into popular use to describe the Emersonian point of view in religion, morals, art, history, and social reform; and all of them have a relative value and are approximately correct. But no one of them is adequate.

For example, Emerson has been called a *Transcendentalist*, as if that told the whole story. Now, he did undeniably reiterate the truth that man has a knowledge of something besides the data of the five senses and their relations, and that man has an interest in something above the pleasures and needs of the body. But the term transcendentalism gives no clue as to what that something beyond the senses is which, according to Emerson, man knows and is concerned about. The word is misleading also, because Emerson, although not an agnostic, placed definite limits to human knowledge and to legitimate curiosity. He taught that, while our knowledge may transcend our senses, it cannot transcend the forms and laws of the mind itself. But the wish to transcend the mind itself was to him folly. He knew of no reality beyond the sense-world and the world of moral ideas. The transcendental realm was, for him, the sphere of moral experience, as compared with the world of the senses. He was as severe in censuring those who would pass beyond moral experience in search of spiritual reality as in rebuking those who remain within the life of physical sensation and its interests.

Emerson has been called a *Mystic*. And he did undoubtedly deify—so to speak—certain moments of clear insight. Not all states of mind and heart were to him of the same worth or equally to be trusted. There come brief and perhaps rare periods when the mind knows itself to be the Absolute, the Ultimate, the Real, the Creator, the Universe itself. In these hours or minutes it never transcends the realm of experience; it never lifts the veil; but—glory of glories—it sees that there is no veil to lift; there are no problems left unsolved; there is no desire for any Beyond; there is no possibility of more, nor need of more. The mind now comprehends, and is a perfect whole. There is no more craving of the heart. The will finds itself fulfilled, and the inner eye is satisfied with seeing.

The moment of insight will pass away, but by the memory of it one may be enabled to live months, years, and a whole lifetime, in spiritual serenity, in glad conscientiousness and in readiness either to do or to cease to be, as may prove impersonally best. This is the Emersonian mysticism. It is astonishingly like that of Meister Eckhardt—whose writings, however, Emerson did not know. But while Eckhardt, Boehme, Swedenborg, and all other mystics of the West, were Christian and identified that which is revealed in the hour of insight with Christ, Emerson freed his mysticism from every particular theology, and from any one set of symbols and historic

events and personages. His was purely *Ethical Mysticism*, and he was the first —unless anticipated by Plato—to teach it. That to which he assigned infinite majesty was nothing but the Idea of Justice. To him the universal moral sentiment was the ultimate reality which reason requires and for which the heart thirsts.

Emerson's mysticism was likewise wholly free from those marks which in general are taken to be the essence and peculiarity of all mysticism. The states of intuition which he exalted had nothing in common with second sight. They included no power of immediately knowing what is happening at a distance or what has occurred in the past or will take place in the years to come, and no power of communing with disembodied intelligences. There was nothing transcendent in the Emersonian mysticism. It rather involved contempt for occultism. Its recognition of the sufficiency, finality, and splendour of moral ideas was incompatible with the high valuation which the desire to cultivate clairvoyance sets upon communications with absent persons and upon what might happen at a distance, or in times past or to come.

Emerson's message is often summed up as *Idealistic Individualism*. And certainly more persons of eccentric mould have found sublime texts in Emerson, upon which to justify their being a law unto themselves, than could be drawn from any other writer of equal genius and sanity. He undoubtedly placed in the foreground of his gospel, *Trust thyself*. But the reader must be dazed with passion or with vanity who does not quickly discover that this "thyself" of Emerson is not the animal of Whitman, nor the blind impulse of Maeterlinck, nor the more-than-man of Nietzsche, but the universal man in all of us. In Whitman we see Emerson-sensualised; in Maeterlinck, Emerson-degenerate; and in Nietzsche, Emerson-insane. But in himself he is sober and modest; and who reads aright, perceives the exquisite harmony of self-respect and respect for others, which is an inaccessible mystery to all worldlings, to the relaxed, and to those who deify themselves. All that is finest in thee, most secret and most precious—the thought that no man entertained before thee, the forms of beauty no other ever could have conceived, thy rare gift to discover laws hitherto undreamt of—for all these thou art most indebted to that which is not thyself. Indeed, if thou hast not transcended the self of the senses, thou hast not found thyself. Emerson's self-reliance opens out into his over-soul. What thou dost boast of as thyself is not Thyself. There is only one Self, and that is in all of us and is each. Emerson's idealistic individualism is at the same time organic, spiritual socialism. He realised, as many are beginning to do to-day, that individualism and socialism are mutually dependent conceptions, and both are needed in a sound social philosophy and in a wise psychology.

Some critics find it the happiest way of reporting the essence of Emerson, to say that he is the great *Philosopher of Democracy*. And who can gainsay this characterisation? (All that can be brought against it is that Emerson's thought does not begin with Democracy, but comes to it and ends in it.) He is a moral transcendentalist, an ethical mystic, a spiritual socialist. It follows inevitably that he is the prophet of democracy, but only of organic and ethical democracy, and of those organisations which attempt

to bring each individual into self-respecting service of the whole world, and to apply the life of the whole world to the quickening of each. Let every man discover and contribute that which is most peculiar to himself; but let him know himself to be a fool if he imagines that this which is peculiar to himself redounds to his own glory. It is the work of the universe, and he owes it to the universe.

Emerson is often declared to be pre-eminently a *Moral Optimist*. But his optimism is of no ordinary kind. It is, with him, not so much that whatever is, is right; but rather that whatever is right is practicable now, and is the only sane course. What the mind sees in the moment of mystical and spiritual illumination—that is, of intellectual-ethical insight—makes it impossible not to hope all things. Only preach the gospel of ethical mysticism until all persons trust themselves and see and know for themselves that Justice is the all-satisfying life for the individual and the community; and moral evil and all the miseries which it entails will soon be at an end. Even Emerson's doctrine of compensation, to which every day's experience of actual facts gives the lie, and which, taken literally, is as inhuman and immoral as the old-fashioned puritan doctrine of hell-fire, is at least a terrific allegorical presentation of an everlasting truth—the sovereignty of the moral sentiment. In the moment of mystic ethical insight, To-Be-Just is felt to be the Supreme Good, or, in short, God; and all our suffering and the wrong done to us by others and disappointment become our richest ethical opportunities. Only when a man stands on the height, where to him moral goodness is all-in-all, is there compensation in his life. But this was Emerson's point of view. From no other is he an optimist.

There is no word in common use which fits Emerson's teaching. But this is not because he was lacking in harmony and consistency of thought. It is true he *has* no system; but no one can read him thoroughly and not feel that he *is* a system. The essential nature of it is, perhaps, best indicated by a term introduced by Mr. Frederic Harrison to describe certain recent tendencies in English religious life. Mr. Harrison has coined the word *Ethicism*, and we cannot do better than apply this epithet to Emerson's point of view. Emerson was an Ethicist. His doctrine is Ethicism. His main thesis is that morality, character, conduct, is independent of beliefs in a reality beyond experience and a life after death, and is the sovereign good. Thus, both for the intellect and the heart, both as an object of knowledge and of craving, both as a reality and as a thing to be desired, Justice is Ultimate. Justice needs no transcendent metaphysics to support its claim. It requires no bribes to induce him who sees its reality and worth to leave all else and follow it.

The thought that morality is thus independent of what is beyond experience and sovereign over all other objects which the heart craves for is now recognised by Emerson's critics as the one principle animating his writings, not only determining his judgments and opinions, but even dictating his style and mannerism. He made it his life-work to bring home to men the Independence and Supremacy of Virtue.

The addresses and essays here published have been selected because they best embody Emerson's central teaching.

STANTON COIT.

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# ADDRESSES AND ESSAYS

## SELF-RELIANCE

I READ the other day some verses written by an eminent painter which were original and not conventional. The soul always hears an admonition in such lines, let the subject be what it may. The sentiment they instil is of more value than any thought they may contain. To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost, and our first thought is rendered back to us by the trumpets of the Last Judgment. Familiar as the voice of the mind is to each, the highest merit we ascribe to Moses, Plato, and Milton is that they set at naught books and traditions, and spoke not what men, but what *they* thought. A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. Yet he dismisses without notice his thought, because it is his. In every work of genius we recognise our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty. Great works of art have no more affecting lesson for us than this. They teach us to abide by our spontaneous impression with good-humoured inflexibility then most when the whole cry of voices is on the other side. Else to-morrow a stranger will say, with masterly good sense, precisely what we have thought and felt all the time, and we shall be forced to take with shame our own opinion from another.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better for worse as his portion; that, though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. Not for nothing one face, one character, one fact, makes much impression on him, and another none. This sculpture in the memory is not without pre-established harmony. The eye was placed where one ray should fall, that it might testify of that particular ray. We but half express ourselves, and are ashamed of that divine idea which each of us represents. It may be safely trusted as proportionate and of good issues, so it be faithfully imparted; but God will not have his work made manifest by cowards. A man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best; but what he has said or done otherwise shall give him no peace. It is a deliverance which does not deliver. In the attempt his genius deserts him; no muse befriends; no invention, no hope.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the

divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves, childlike, to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What pretty oracles nature yields us on this text in the face and behaviour of children, babes, and even brutes! That divided and rebel mind, that distrust of a sentiment because our arithmetic has computed the strength and means opposed to our purpose, these have not. Their mind being whole, their eye is as yet unconquered, and when we look in their faces we are disconcerted. Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it; so that one babe commonly makes four or five out of the adults who prattle and play to it. So God has armed youth and puberty and manhood no less with its own piquancy and charm, and made it enviable and gracious, and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself. Do not think the youth has no force, because he cannot speak to you and me. Hark! in the next room his voice is sufficiently clear and emphatic. It seems he knows how to speak to his contemporaries. Bashful or bold, then, he will know how to make us seniors very unnecessary.

The nonchalance of boys who are sure of a dinner, and would disdain as much as a lord to do or say aught to conciliate one, is the healthy attitude of human nature. A boy is in the parlour what the pit is in the playhouse: independent, irresponsible, looking out from his corner on such people and facts as pass by, he tries and sentences them on their merits, in the swift, summary way of boys, as good, bad, interesting, silly, eloquent, troublesome. He cumbers himself never about consequences, about interests; he gives an independent, genuine verdict. You must court him; he does not court you. But the man is, as it were, clapped into gaol by his consciousness. As soon as he has once acted or spoken with *éclat* he is a committed person, watched by the sympathy or the hatred of hundreds, whose affections must now enter into his account. There is no Lethe for this. Ah, that he could pass again into his neutrality! Who can thus avoid all pledges, and, having observed, observe again from the same unaffected, unbiassed, unbribable, unaffrighted innocence, must always be formidable. He would utter opinions on all passing affairs, which, being seen to be not private but necessary, would sink like darts into the ear of men and put them in fear.

These are the voices which we hear in solitude, but they grow faint and inaudible as we enter into the world. Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which, when quite young, I was prompted to make to a valued adviser, who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the Church. On my saying, "What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions if I live wholly from within?" my friend

suggested: "But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied: "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this: the only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it. A man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if every thing were titular and ephemeral but he. I am ashamed to think how easily we capitulate to badges and names, to large societies and dead institutions. Every decent and well-spoken individual affects and sways me more than is right. I ought to go upright and vital, and speak the rude truth in all ways. If malice and vanity wear the coat of philanthropy, shall that pass? If an angry bigot assumes this bountiful cause of Abolition, and comes to me with his last news from Barbadoes, why should I not say to him: "Go, love thy infant; love thy wood-chopper; be good-natured and modest; have that grace; and never varnish your hard, uncharitable ambition with this incredible tenderness for black folk a thousand miles off. Thy love afar is spite at home"? Rough and graceless would be such greeting, but truth is handsomer than the affectation of love. Your goodness must have some edge to it, else it is none. The doctrine of hatred must be preached, as the counteraction of the doctrine of love, when that pules and whines. I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me. I would write on the lintels of the door-post, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then, again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me, and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world, as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself, and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need, for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows, any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to

live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence [illegible]

[illegible] objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead Church; contribute to a dead Bible society; vote with a great party either for the Government or against it; spread your table like base housekeepers—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are, and, of course, so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blindman's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect, I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his Church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that, with all this ostentation of examining the grounds of the institution, he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us, and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved, but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The bystanders look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlour. If this aversation had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own, he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it god-like as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loath to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never

to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet, when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and colour. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and to-morrow speak what to-morrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said to-day. "Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood." Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood.

I suppose no man can violate his nature. All the sallies of his will are rounded in by the law of his being, as the inequalities of Andes and Himmaleh are insignificant in the curve of the sphere. Nor does it matter how you gauge and try him. A character is like an acrostic or Alexandrian stanza—read it forward, backward, or across, it still spells the same thing. In this pleasing contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. My book should smell of pines and resound with the hum of insects. The swallow over my window should interweave that thread or straw he carries in his bill into my web also. We pass for what we are. Character teaches above our wills. Men imagine that they communicate their virtue or vice only by overt actions, and do not see that virtue or vice emit a breath every moment.

There will be an agreement in whatever variety of actions, so they be each honest and natural in their hour. For of one will, the actions will be harmonious, however unlike they seem. These varieties are lost sight of at a little distance, at a little height of thought. One tendency unites them all. The voyage of the best ship is a zigzag line of a hundred tacks. See the line from a sufficient distance, and it strengthens itself to the average tendency. Your genuine action will explain itself and will explain your other genuine actions. Your conformity explains nothing. Act singly, and what you have already done singly will justify you now. Greatness appeals to the future. If I can be firm enough to-day to do right and scorn eyes, I must have done so much right before as to defend me now. Be it how it will, do right now. Always scorn appearances, and you always may. The force of character is cumulative. All the foregone days of virtue work their health into this. What makes the majesty of the heroes of the senate and the field, which so fills the imagination? The consciousness of a train of great days and victories behind. They shed an united light on the advancing actor. He is attended as by a visible escort of angels. That is it which throws thunder into Chatham's voice, and dignity into Washington's port, and America into Adams's eye. Honour is venerable to us because it is no ephemera. It is always ancient virtue. We worship it to-day because it is not of to-day. We love it and pay it homage because it is not a trap for our love and homage, but is self-dependent, self-derived, and, therefore, of an old immaculate pedigree, even if shown in a young person.

I hope in these days we have heard the last of conformity and consistency. Let the words be gazetted and ridiculous henceforward. Instead of the gong for dinner, let us hear a whistle from the

Spartan fife. Let us never bow and apologise more. A great man is coming to eat at my house. I do not wish to please him; I wish that he should wish to please me. I will stand here for humanity, and, though I would make it kind, I would make it true. Let us affront and reprimand the smooth mediocrity and squalid contentment of the times, and hurl in the face of custom and trade and office the fact which is the upshot of all history, that there is a great responsible Thinker and Actor working wherever a man works; that a true man belongs to no other time or place, but is the centre of things. Where he is, there is nature. He measures you and all men and all events. Ordinarily, everybody in society reminds us of somewhat else, or of some other person. Character, reality, reminds you of nothing else; it takes place of the whole creation. The man must be so much that he must make all circumstances indifferent. Every true man is a cause, a country, and an age; requires infinite spaces and numbers and time fully to accomplish his design; and posterity seem to follow his steps as a train of clients. A man Cæsar is born, and for ages after we have a Roman Empire. Christ is born, and millions of minds so grow and cleave to his genius that he is confounded with virtue and the possible of man. An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, Monachism, of the Hermit Antony; the Reformation, of Luther; Quakerism, of Fox; Methodism, of Wesley; Abolition, of Clarkson. Scipio, Milton called "the height of Rome"; and all history resolves itself very easily into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons.

Let a man, then, know his worth and keep things under his feet. Let him not peep or steal, or skulk up and down with the air of a charity boy, a bastard, or an interloper in the world which exists for him. But the man in the street, finding no worth in himself which corresponds to the force which built a tower or sculptured a marble god, feels poor when he looks on these. To him, a palace, a statue, or a costly book have an alien and forbidding air, much like a gay equipage, and seem to say like that, "Who are you, Sir?" Yet they all are his, suitors for his notice, petitioners to his faculties, that they will come out and take possession. The picture waits for my verdict; it is not to command me, but I am to settle its claims to praise. That popular fable of the sot who was picked up dead-drunk in the street, carried to the duke's house, washed and dressed and laid in the duke's bed, and, on his waking, treated with all obsequious ceremony like the duke, and assured that he had been insane, owes its popularity to the fact that it symbolises so well the state of man who is in the world a sort of sot, but now and then wakes up, exercises his reason, and finds himself a true prince.

Our reading is mendicant and sycophantic. In history our imagination plays us false. Kingdom and lordship, power and estate, are a gaudier vocabulary than private John and Edward in a small house and common day's work; but the things of life are the same to both; the sum-total of both is the same. Why all this deference to Alfred and Scanderberg and Gustavus? Suppose they were virtuous; did they wear out virtue? As great a stake depends on your private act to-day as followed their public and renowned steps. When private men shall act with original views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen.

The world has been instructed by its kings, who have so magnetised the eyes of nations. It has been taught by this colossal symbol the mutual reverence that is due from man to man. The joyful loyalty with which men have everywhere suffered the king, the noble, or the great proprietor to walk among them by a law of his own, make his own scale of men and things and reverse theirs, pay for benefits not with money but with honour, and represent the law in his person, was the hieroglyphic by which they obscurely signified their consciousness of their own

right and comeliness, the right of every man.

The magnetism which all original action exerts is explained when we inquire the reason of self-trust. Who is the Trustee. What is the aboriginal Self, on which a universal reliance may be grounded? What is the nature and power of that science-baffling star, without parallax, without calculable elements, which shoots a ray of beauty even into trivial and impure actions, if the least mark of independence appear? The inquiry leads us to that source, at once the essence of genius, of virtue, and of life, which we call Spontaneity or Instinct. We denote this primary wisdom as Intuition, while all later teachings are tuitions. In that deep force, the last fact behind which analysis cannot go, all things find their common origin. For the sense of being which in calm hours rises, we know not how, in the soul is not diverse from things, from space, from light, from time, from man, but one with them, and proceeds obviously from the same source whence their life and being also proceed. We first share the life by which things exist and afterwards see them as appearances in nature, and forget that we have shared their cause. Here is the fountain of action and of thought. Here are the lungs of that inspiration which giveth man wisdom, and which cannot be denied without impiety and atheism. We lie in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams. If we ask whence this comes, if we seek to pry into the soul that causes, all philosophy is at fault. Its presence or its absence is all we can affirm. Every man discriminates between the voluntary acts of his mind and his involuntary perceptions, and knows that to his involuntary perceptions a perfect faith is due. He may err in the expression of them, but he knows that these things are so, like day and night, not to be disputed. My wilful actions and acquisitions are but roving; the idlest reverie, the faintest native emotion, command my curiosity and respect. Thoughtless people contradict as readily the statement of perceptions as of opinions, or rather much more readily; for they do not distinguish between perception and motion. They fancy that I choose to see this or that thing. But perception is not whimsical, but fatal. If I see a trait, my children will see it after me, and in course of time all mankind—although it may chance that no one has seen it before me. For my perception of it is as much a fact as the sun.

The relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure that it is profane to seek to interpose helps. It must be that when God speaketh he should communicate, not one thing, but all things; should fill the world with his voice; should scatter forth light, nature, time, souls, from the centre of the present thought; and new date and new create the whole. Whenever a mind is simple and receives a divine wisdom, old things pass away—means, teachers, texts, temples fall; it lives now, and absorbs past and future into the present hour. All things are made sacred by relation to it—one as much as another. All things are dissolved to their centre by their cause, and in the universal miracle petty and particular miracles disappear. If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not. Is the acorn better than the oak which is its fulness and completion? Is the parent better than the child into whom he has cast his ripened being? Whence, then, this worship of the past? The centuries are conspirators against the sanity and authority of the soul. Time and space are but physiological colours which the eye makes, but the soul is light: where it is, is day; where it was, is night; and history is an impertinence and an injury if it be any thing more than a cheerful apologue or parable of my being and becoming.

Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say "I think," "I am," but quotes some saint or sage. He is ashamed before the blade of grass or the blowing rose. These roses under my window make no reference to former roses or to better ones: they are for what they are; they exist with God to-day. There is no time to them. There is simply the rose; it is perfect in every moment of its existence. Before a leaf-bud has burst, its whole life acts; in the full-blown flower there is no more; in the leafless root there is no less. Its nature is satisfied, and it satisfies nature in all moments alike. But man postpones or remembers; he does not live in the present, but with reverted eye laments the past, or, heedless of the riches that surround him, stands on tiptoe to foresee the future. He cannot be happy and strong until he too lives with nature in the present, above time.

This should be plain enough. Yet see what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives. We are like children who repeat by rote the sentences of grandames and tutors, and, as they grow older, of the men of talents and character they chance to see—painfully recollecting the exact words they spoke; afterwards, when they come into the point of view which those had who uttered these sayings, they understand them and are willing to let the words go; for at any time they can use words as good when occasion comes. If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn.

And now at last the highest truth on this subject remains unsaid—probably cannot be said; for all that we say is the far-off remembering of the intuition. That thought by what I can now nearest approach to say it is this. When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new. It shall exclude example and experience. You take the way from man, not to man. All persons that ever existed are its forgotten ministers. Fear and hope are alike beneath it. There is somewhat low even in hope. In the hour of vision there is nothing that can be called gratitude, nor properly joy. The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well. Vast spaces of nature, the Atlantic Ocean, the South Sea; long intervals of time, years, centuries, are of no account. This which I think and feel underlay every former state of life and circumstances, as it does underlie my present, and what is called life and what is called death.

Life only avails, not the having lived. Power ceases in the instant of repose; it resides in the moment of transition from a past to a new state, in the shooting of the gulf, in the darting to an aim. This one fact the world hates; that the soul *becomes;* for that forever degrades the past, turns all riches to poverty, all reputation to a shame, confounds the saint with the rogue, shoves Jesus and Judas equally aside. Why, then, do we prate of self-reliance? Inasmuch as the soul is present, there will be power not confident but agent. To talk of reliance is a poor external way of speaking. Speak rather of that which relies because it works and is. Who has more obedience than I masters me, though he should not raise his finger. Round him I must revolve by the gravitation of spirits. We fancy it rhetoric when we speak of eminent virtue. We do not yet see that virtue is Height, and that a man or a

company of men, plastic and permeable to principles, by the law of nature must overpower and ride all cities, nations, kings, rich men, poets, who are not.

This is the ultimate fact which we so quickly reach on this, as on every topic, the resolution of all into the ever-blessed ONE. Self-existence is the attribute of the Supreme Cause, and it constitutes the measure of good by the degree in which it enters into all lower forms. All things real are so by so much virtue as they contain. Commerce, husbandry, hunting, whaling, war, eloquence, personal weight, are somewhat, and engage my respect as examples of its presence and impure action. I see the same law working in nature for conservation and growth. Power is, in nature, the essential measure of right. Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdoms which cannot help itself. The genesis and maturation of a planet, its poise and orbit, the bended tree recovering itself from the strong wind, the vital resources of every animal and vegetable, are demonstrations of the self-sufficing and therefore self-relying soul.

Thus all concentrates: let us not rove; let us sit at home with the cause. Let us stun and astonish the intruding rabble of men and books and institutions by a simple declaration of the divine fact. Bid the invaders take the shoes from off their feet, for God is here within. Let our simplicity judge them, and our docility to our own law demonstrate the poverty of nature and fortune beside our native riches.

But now we are a mob. Man does not stand in awe of man, nor is his genius admonished to stay at home, to put itself in communication with the internal ocean, but it goes abroad to beg a cup of water of the urns of other men. We must go alone. I like the silent church before the service begins, better than any preaching. How far off, how cool, how chaste the persons look, begirt each one with a precinct or sanctuary! So let us always sit. Why should we assume the faults of our friend, or wife, or father, or child, because they sit around our hearth, or are said to have the same blood? All men have my blood, and I have all men's. Not for that will I adopt their petulance or folly, even to the extent of being ashamed of it. But your isolation must not be mechanical, but spiritual—that is, must be elevation. At times the whole world seems to be in conspiracy to importune you with emphatic trifles. Friend, client, child, sickness, fear, want, charity—all knock at once at thy closet door and say, "Come out unto us." But keep thy state; come not into their confusion. The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act. "What we love that we have, but by desire we bereave ourselves of the love."

If we cannot at once rise to the sanctities of obedience and faith, let us at least resist our temptations; let us enter into the state of war and wake Thor and Woden, courage and constancy, in our Saxon breasts. This is to be done in our smooth times by speaking the truth. Check this lying hospitality and lying affection. Live no longer to the expectation of these deceived and deceiving people with whom we converse. Say to them: "O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law. I will have no covenants but proximities. I shall endeavour to nourish my parents, to support my family, to be the chaste husband of one wife; but these relations I must fill after a new and unprecedented way. I appeal from your customs. I must be myself. I cannot break myself any longer for you, or you. If you can love me for what I am, we shall be the happier. If you cannot, I will still seek to deserve that you should. I will not hide my tastes or aversions. I will so trust that what is deep is holy, that I will do strongly before the sun and moon whatever inly rejoices me and the heart

appoints. If you are noble, I will love you; if you are not, I will not hurt you and myself by hypocritical attentions. If you are true, but not in the same truth with me, cleave to your companions; I will seek my own. I do this not selfishly, but humbly and truly. It is alike your interest, and mine, and all men's, however long we have dwelt in lies, to live in truth. Does this sound harsh to-day? You will soon love what is dictated by your nature as well as mine, and if we follow the truth it will bring us out safe at last." But so may you give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power to save their sensibility. Besides, all persons have their moments of reason when they look out into the region of absolute truth; then will they justify me and do the same thing.

The populace think that your rejection of popular standards is a rejection of all standard, and mere antinomianism; and the bold sensualist will use the name of philosophy to gild his crimes. But the law of consciousness abides. There are two confessionals, in one or the other of which we must be shriven. You may fulfil your round of duties by clearing yourself in the *direct* or in the *reflex* way. Consider whether you have satisfied your relations to father, mother, cousin, neighbour, town, cat, and dog; whether any of these can upbraid you. But I may also neglect this reflex standard and absolve me to myself. I have my own stern claims and perfect circle. It denies the name of duty to many offices that are called duties. But if I can discharge its debts, it enables me to dispense with the popular code. If any one imagines that this law is lax, let him keep its commandment one day.

And truly it demands something godlike in him who has cast off the common motives of humanity and has ventured to trust himself for a taskmaster. High be his heart, faithful his will, clear his sight, that he may in good earnest be doctrine, society, law, to himself, that a simple purpose may be to him as strong as iron necessity is to others!

If any man consider the present aspects of what is called by distinction *society*, he will see the need of these ethics. The sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers. We are afraid of truth, afraid of fortune, afraid of death, and afraid of each other. Our age yields no great and perfect persons. We want men and women who shall renovate life and our social state; but we see that most natures are insolvent, cannot satisfy their own wants, have an ambition out of all proportion to their practical force, and do lean and beg day and night continually. Our housekeeping is mendicant; our arts, our occupations, our marriages, our religion we have not chosen, but society has chosen for us. We are parlour soldiers. We shun the rugged battle of fate, where strength is born.

If our young men miscarry in their first enterprises, they lose all heart. If the young merchant fails, men say he is *ruined*. If the finest genius studies at one of our colleges, and is not installed in an office within one year afterwards in the cities or suburbs of Boston or New York, it seems to his friends and to himself that he is right in being disheartened and in complaining the rest of his life. A sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who in turn tries all the professions, who *teams it*, *farms it*, *peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth, in successive years, and always like a cat falls on his feet, is worth a hundred of these city dolls. He walks abreast with his days and feels no shame in not "studying a profession," for he does not postpone his life, but lives already. He has not one chance, but a hundred chances. Let a Stoic open the resources of man and tell men they are not leaning willows, but can and must detach themselves; that, with the exercise of self-trust, new powers shall appear; that a man is the word made flesh, born to shed healing to the nations; that he should be ashamed of our compassion,

and that the moment he acts from himself, tossing the laws, the books, idolatries, and customs out of the window, we pity him no more, but thank and revere him —and that teacher shall restore the life of man to splendour and make his name dear to all history.

It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views.

1. In what prayers do men allow themselves! That which they call a holy office is not so much as brave and manly. Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign addition to come through some foreign virtue, and loses itself in endless mazes of natural and supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. Prayer that craves a particular commodity, anything less than all good, is vicious. Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view. It is the soliloquy of a beholding and jubilant soul. It is the spirit of God pronouncing his works good. But prayer as a means to effect a private end is meanness and theft. It supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the stroke of his oar, are true prayers heard throughout nature, though for cheap ends. Caratach, in Fletcher's *Bonduca*, when admonished to inquire the mind of the god Audate, replies:

> "His hidden meaning lies in our endeavours;
> Our valours are our best gods."

Another sort of false prayers are our regrets. (Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will.) Regret calamities if you can thereby help the sufferer; if not, attend your own work, and already the evil begins to be repaired. Our sympathy is just about as base. We come to them who weep foolishly and sit down and cry for company, instead of imparting to them truth and health in rough electric shocks, putting them once more in communication with their own reason. The secret of fortune is joy in our hands. Welcome evermore to gods and men is the self-helping man. For him all doors are flung wide; him all tongues greet, all honours crown, all eyes follow with desire. Our love goes out to him and embraces him, because he did not need it. We solicitously and apologetically caress and celebrate him because he held on his way and scorned our disapprobation. The gods love him because men hated him. "To the persevering mortal," said Zoroaster, "the blessed Immortals are swift."

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect. They say with those foolish Israelites: "Let not God speak to us, lest we die. Speak thou, speak any man with us, and we will obey." Everywhere I am hindered of meeting God in my brother, because he has shut his own temple doors and recites fables merely of his brother's, or his brother's brother's God. Every new mind is a new classification. If it prove a mind of uncommon activity and power, a Locke, a Lavoisier, a Hutton, a Bentham, a Fourier, it imposes its classification on other men, and lo! a new system. In proportion to the depth of the thought, and so to the number of the objects it touches and brings within reach of the pupil, is his complacency. But chiefly is this apparent in creeds and Churches, which are also classifications of some powerful mind acting on the elemental thought of duty and man's relation to the Highest. Such is Calvinism, Quakerism, and Swedenborgism. The pupil takes the same delight in subordinating everything to the new terminology as a girl who has just learned botany in seeing a new earth and new seasons thereby. It will happen for a time that the pupil will find his intellectual power has grown by the study of his master's mind. But in all

unbalanced minds the classification is idolised, passes for the end and not for a speedily exhaustible means, so that the walls of the system blend to their eye in the remote horizon with the walls of the universe; the luminaries of heaven seem to them hung on the arch their master built. They cannot imagine how you aliens have any right to see, how you can see: "It must be somehow that you stole the light from us." They do not yet perceive that light, unsystematic, indomitable, will break into any cabin, even into theirs. Let them chirp awhile and call it their own. If they are honest and do well, presently their neat new pinfold will be too strait and low, will crack, will lean, will rot and vanish, and the immortal light, all young and joyful, million-orbed, million-coloured, will beam over the universe as on the first morning.

2. It is for want of self-culture that the superstition of Travelling, whose idols are Italy, England, Egypt, retains its fascination for all educated Americans. They who made England, Italy, or Greece venerable in the imagination, did so by sticking fast where they were, like an axis of the earth. In manly hours we feel that duty is our place. The soul is no traveller; the wise man stays at home, and when his necessities, his duties, on any occasion call him from his house, or into foreign lands, he is at home still, and shall make men sensible by the expression of his countenance that he goes, the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign and not like an interloper or a valet.

I have no churlish objection to the circumnavigation of the globe for the purposes of art, of study, and benevolence, so that the man is first domesticated, or does not go abroad with the hope of finding somewhat greater than he knows. He who travels to be amused, or to get somewhat which he does not carry, travels away from himself, and grows old even in youth among old things. In Thebes, in Palmyra, his will and mind have become old and dilapidated as they. He carries ruins to ruins.

Travelling is a fool's paradise. Our first journeys discover to us the indifference of places. At home I dream that at Naples, at Rome, I can be intoxicated with beauty and lose my sadness. I pack my trunk, embrace my friends, embark on the sea, and at last wake up in Naples, and there beside me is the stern fact, the sad self, unrelenting, identical, that I fled from. I seek the Vatican and the palaces. I affect to be intoxicated with sights and suggestions, but I am not intoxicated. My giant goes with me wherever I go.

3. But the rage of travelling is a symptom of a deeper unsoundness affecting the whole intellectual action. The intellect is vagabond, and our system of education fosters restlessness. Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home. We imitate; and what is imitation but the travelling of the mind? Our houses are built with foreign taste; our shelves are garnished with foreign ornaments; our opinions, our tastes, our faculties, lean, and follow the Past and the Distant. The soul created the arts wherever they have flourished. It was in his own mind that the artist sought his model. It was an application of his own thought to the thing to be done and the conditions to be observed. And why need we copy the Doric or the Gothic model? Beauty, convenience, grandeur of thought and quaint expression, are as near to us as to any; and if the American artist will study with hope and love the precise thing to be done by him, considering the climate, the soil, the length of the day, the wants of the people, the habit and form of the government, he will create a house in which all these will find themselves fitted, and taste and sentiment will be satisfied also.

Insist on yourself; never imitate. Your own gift you can present every moment with the cumulative force of a whole life's cultivation; but of the adopted talent of another you have only an extemporaneous half-possession. That which each can do best none but his Maker can teach him. No man yet knows what it is,

nor can, till that person has exhibited it. Where is the master who could have taught Shakespeare? Where is the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington, or Bacon, or Newton? Every great man is a unique. The Scipionism of Scipio is precisely that part he could not borrow. Shakespeare will never be made by the study of Shakespeare. Do that which is assigned you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much. There is at this moment for you an utterance brave and grand as that of the colossal chisel of Phidias, or trowel of the Egyptians, or the pen of Moses or Dante, but different from all these. Not possibly will the soul, all rich, all eloquent, with thousand-cloven tongue, deign to repeat itself; but if you can hear what these patriarchs say, surely you can reply to them in the same pitch of voice; for the ear and the tongue are two organs of one nature. Abide in the simple and noble regions of thy life, obey thy heart, and thou shalt reproduce the Foreworld again.

4. As our Religion, our Education, our Art look abroad, so does our spirit of society. All men plume themselves on the improvement of society, and no man improves.

Society never advances. It recedes as fast on one side as it gains on the other. It undergoes continual changes; it is barbarous, it is civilised, it is christianised, it is rich, it is scientific; but this change is not amelioration. For everything that is given, something is taken. Society acquires new arts and loses old instincts. What a contrast between the well-clad, reading, writing, thinking American, with a watch, a pencil, and a bill of exchange in his pocket, and the naked New Zealander, whose property is a club, a spear, a mat, and an undivided twentieth of a shed to sleep under! But compare the health of the two men, and you shall see that the white man has lost his aboriginal strength. If the traveller tell us truly, strike the savage with a broad axe, and in a day or two the flesh shall unite and heal as if you struck the blow into soft pitch; and the same blow shall send the white to his grave.

The civilised man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanack he has, and so, being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His note-books impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance-office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms some vigour of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

There is no more deviation in the moral standard than in the standard of height or bulk. No greater men are now than ever were. A singular equality may be observed between the great men of the first and of the last ages; nor can all the science, art, religion, and philosophy of the nineteenth century avail to educate greater men than Plutarch's heroes, three or four and twenty centuries ago. Not in time is the race progressive. Phocion, Socrates, Anaxagoras, Diogenes, are great men, but they leave no class. He who is really of their class will not be called by their name, but will be his own man, and in his turn the founder of a sect. The arts and inventions of each period are only its costume, and do not invigorate men. The harm of the improved machinery may compensate its good. Hudson and Behring accomplished so much in their fishing-boats as to astonish Parry and Franklin, whose equipment exhausted the resources of science and art. Galileo, with an opera-glass, discovered a more splendid series of celestial phenomena than any one since. Columbus found the New World in an undecked boat. It is curious to see the periodical

disuse and perishing of means and machinery which were introduced with loud laudation a few years or centuries before. The great genius returns to essential man. We reckoned the improvements of the art of war among the triumphs of science, and yet Napoleon conquered Europe by the bivouac, which consisted of falling back on naked valour and disencumbering it of all aids. The Emperor held it impossible to make a perfect army, says Las Casas, "without abolishing our arms, magazines, commissaries and carriages, until, in imitation of the Roman custom, the soldier should receive his supply of corn, grind it in his hand-mill, and bake his bread himself."

Society is a wave. The wave moves onward, but the water of which it is composed does not. The same particle does not rise from the valley to the ridge. Its unity is only phenomenal. The persons who make up a nation to-day next year die, and their experience dies with them.

And so the reliance on Property, including the reliance on governments which protect it, is the want of self-reliance. Men have looked away from themselves and at things so long that they have come to esteem the religious, learned, and civil institutions as guards of property, and they deprecate assaults on these, because they feel them to be assaults on property. They measure their esteem of each other by what each has, and not by what each is. But a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he see that it is accidental—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime; then he feels that it is not having; it does not belong to him, has no root in him, and merely lies there because no revolution or no robber takes it away. But that which a man is does always by necessity acquire; and what the man acquires is living property, which does not wait the beck of rulers, or mobs, or revolutions, or fire, or storm, or bankruptcies, but perpetually renews itself wherever the man breathes. "Thy lot or portion of life," said the Caliph Ali, "is seeking after thee; therefore be at rest from seeking after it." Our dependence on these foreign goods leads us to our slavish respect for numbers. The political parties meet in numerous conventions; the greater the concourse and with each new uproar of announcement, The delegation from Essex! The Democrats from New Hampshire! The Whigs of Maine! the young patriot feels himself stronger than before by a new thousand of eyes and arms. In like manner, the reformers summon conventions and vote and resolve in multitude. Not so, O friends! will the God deign to enter and inhabit you, but by a method precisely the reverse. It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and, in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee. He who knows that power is inborn, that he is weak because he has looked for good out of him and elsewhere, and, so perceiving, throws himself unhesitatingly on his thought, instantly rights himself, stands in the erect position, commands his limbs, works miracles; just as a man who stands on his feet is stronger than a man who stands on his head.

So use all that is called Fortune. Most men gamble with her, and gain all, and lose all, as her wheel rolls. But do thou leave as unlawful these winnings, and deal with Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God. In the Will work and acquire, and thou hast chained the wheel of Chance, and shalt sit hereafter out of fear from her rotations. A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favourable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.

# CHARACTER

I HAVE read that those who listened to Lord Chatham felt that there was something finer in the man than anything which he said. It has been complained of our brilliant English historian of the French Revolution that, when he has told all his facts about Mirabeau, they do not justify his estimate of his genius. The Gracchi, Agis, Cleomenes, and others of Plutarch's heroes, do not in the record of facts equal their own fame. Sir Philip Sidney, the Earl of Essex, Sir Walter Raleigh, are men of great figure and of few deeds. We cannot find the smallest part of the personal weight of Washington in the narrative of his exploits. The authority of the name of Schiller is too great for his books. This inequality of the reputation to the works or the anecdotes is not accounted for by saying that the reverberation is longer than the thunder-clap, but somewhat resided in these men which begot an expectation that outran all their performance. The largest part of their power was latent. This is that which we call Character—a reserved force, which acts directly by presence and without means. It is conceived of as a certain undemonstrable force, a Familiar or Genius, by whose impulses the man is guided, but whose counsels he cannot impart; which is company for him, so that such men are often solitary, or, if they chance to be social, do not need society, but can entertain themselves very well alone. The purest literary talent appears at one time great, at another time small; but character is of a stellar and undiminishable greatness. What others effect by talent or by eloquence this man accomplishes by some magnetism. "Half his strength he put not forth." His victories are by demonstration of superiority, and not by crossing of bayonets. He conquers because his arrival alters the face of affairs. "O Iole! how did you know that Hercules was a god?" "Because," answered Iole, "I was content the moment my eyes fell on him When I beheld Theseus, I desired that I might see him offer battle, or at least guide his horses in the chariot-race; but Hercules did not wait for a contest: he conquered whether he stood, or walked, or sat, or whatever thing he did." Man, ordinarily a pendant to events, only half attached, and that awkwardly, to the world he lives in, in these examples appears to share the life of things, and to be an expression of the same laws which control the tides and the sun, numbers and quantities.

But, to use a more modest illustration and nearer home, I observe that in our political elections, where this element, if it appears at all, can only occur in its coarsest form, we sufficiently understand its incomparable rate. The people know that they need in their representative much more than talent—namely, the power to make his talent trusted. They cannot come at their ends by sending to Congress a learned, acute, and fluent speaker, if he be not one who, before he was appointed by the people to represent them, was appointed by Almighty God to stand for a fact—invincibly persuaded of that fact in himself—so that the most confident and the most violent persons learn that here is resistance on which both impudence and terror are wasted—namely, faith in a fact. The men who carry their points do not need to inquire of their constituents what they should say, but are themselves the country which they represent; nowhere are its emotions or opinions so instant and true as in them; nowhere so pure from a selfish infusion. The constituency at home hearkens to their words, watches the colour of their cheek, and therein, as

in a glass, dresses its own. Our public assemblies are pretty good tests of manly force. Our frank countrymen of the west and south have a taste for character, and like to know whether the New Englander is a substantial man, or whether the hand can pass through him.

The same motive force appears in trade. There are geniuses in trade, as well as in war, or the State, or letters; and the reason why this or that man is fortunate is not to be told. It lies in the man; that is all anybody can tell you about it. See him, and you will know as easily why he succeeds as, if you see Napoleon, you would comprehend his fortune. In the new objects we recognise the old game, the habit of fronting the fact, and not dealing with it at second hand, through the perceptions of somebody else. Nature seems to authorise trade, as soon as you see the natural merchant, who appears not so much a private agent as her factor and Minister of Commerce. His natural probity combines with his insight into the fabric of society to put him above tricks, and he communicates to all his own faith that contracts are of no private interpretation. The habit of his mind is a reference to standards of natural equity and public advantage; and he inspires respect and the wish to deal with him, both for the quiet spirit of honour which attends him and for the intellectual pastime which the spectacle of so much ability affords. This immensely stretched trade, which makes the capes of the Southern Ocean his wharves and the Atlantic Sea his familiar port, centres in his brain only; and nobody in the universe can make his place good. In his parlour I see very well that he has been at hard work this morning, with that knitted brow and that settled humour, which all his desire to be courteous cannot shake off. I see plainly how many firm acts have been done; how many valiant *noes* have this day been spoken, when others would have uttered ruinous *yeas*. I see, with the pride of art and skill of masterly arithmetic and power of remote combination, the consciousness of being an agent and playfellow of the original laws of the world. He, too, believes that none can supply him, and that a man must be born to trade or he cannot learn it.

This virtue draws the mind more when it appears in action to ends not so mixed. It works with most energy in the smallest companies and in private relations. In all cases it is an extraordinary and incomputable agent. The excess of physical strength is paralysed by it. Higher natures overpower lower ones by affecting them with a certain sleep. The faculties are locked up, and offer no resistance. Perhaps that is the universal law. When the high cannot bring up the low to itself it benumbs it, as man charms down the resistance of the lower animals. Men exert on each other a similar occult power. How often has the influence of a true master realised all the tales of magic! A river of command seemed to run down from his eyes into all those who beheld him, a torrent of strong sad light, like an Ohio or Danube, which pervaded them with his thoughts and coloured all events with the hue of his mind. "What means did you employ?" was the question asked of the wife of Concini, in regard to her treatment of Mary of Medici; and the answer was, "Only that influence which every strong mind has over a weak one." Cannot Cæsar in irons shuffle off the irons and transfer them to the person of Hippo or Thraso the turnkey? Is an iron handcuff so immutable a bond? Suppose a slaver on the coast of Guinea should take on board a gang of negroes which should contain persons of the stamp of Toussaint L'Ouverture: or, let us fancy, under these swarthy masks he has a gang of Washingtons in chains. When they arrive at Cuba, will the relative order of the ship's company be the same? Is there nothing but rope and iron? Is there no love, no reverence? Is there never a glimpse of right in a poor slave-captain's mind; and cannot these be supposed available to break or

elude or in any manner overmatch the tension of an inch or two of iron ring?

This is a natural power, like light and heat, and all nature co-operates with it. The reason why we feel one man's presence and do not feel another's is as simple as gravity. Truth is the summit of being; justice is the application of it to affairs. All individual natures stand in a scale, according to the purity of this element in them. The will of the pure runs down from them into other natures, as water runs down from a higher into a lower vessel. This natural force is no more to be withstood than any other natural force. We can drive a stone upward for a moment into the air, but it is yet true that all stones will forever fall; and whatever instances can be quoted of unpunished theft, or of a lie which somebody credited, justice must prevail, and it is the privilege of truth to make itself believed. Character is this moral order seen through the medium of an individual nature. An individual is an encloser. Time and space, liberty and necessity, truth and thought, are left at large no longer. Now, the universe is a close or pound. All things exist in the man tinged with the manners of his soul. With what quality is in him he infuses all nature that he can reach; nor does he tend to love himself in vastness, but, at how long a curve soever, all his regards return into his own good at last. He animates all he can, and he sees only what he animates. He encloses the world, as the patriot does his country, as a material basis for his character, and a theatre for action. A healthy soul stands united with the Just and the True, as the magnet arranges itself with the pole; so that he stands to all beholders like a transparent object betwixt them and the sun, and whoso journeys towards the sun journeys towards that person. He is thus the medium of the highest influence to all who are not on the same level. Thus men of character are the conscience of the society to which they belong.

The natural measure of this power is the resistance of circumstances. Impure men consider life as it is reflected in opinions, events, and persons. They cannot see the action until it is done. Yet its moral element pre-existed in the actor, and its quality as right or wrong it was easy to predict. Everything in nature is bipolar, or has a positive and a negative pole. There is a male and a female, a spirit and a fact, a north and a south. Spirit is the positive, the event is the negative. Will is the north, action the south pole. Character may be ranked as having its natural place in the north. It shares the magnetic currents of the system. The feeble souls are drawn to the south or negative pole. They look at the profit or hurt of the action. They never behold a principle until it is lodged in a person. They do not wish to be lovely, but to be loved. Men of character like to hear of their faults; the other class do not like to hear of faults; they worship events; secure to them a fact, a connection, a certain chain of circumstances, and they will ask no more. The hero sees that the event is ancilary; it must follow *him*. A given order of events has no power to secure to him the satisfaction which the imagination attaches to it; the soul of goodness escapes from any set of circumstances; while prosperity belongs to a certain mind, and will introduce that power and victory which is its natural fruit into any order of events. No change of circumstances can repair a defect of character. We boast our emancipation from many superstitions; but if we have broken any idols, it is through a transfer of the idolatry. What have I gained that I no longer immolate a bull to Jove or to Neptune, or a mouse to Hecate; that I do not tremble before the Eumenides, or the Catholic Purgatory, or the Calvinistic Judgment-day—if I quake at opinion, the public opinion as we call it; or at the threat of assault, or contumely, or bad neighbours, or poverty, or mutilation, or at the rumour of revolution, or of murder? If I quake, what matters it what I quake at? Our proper vice takes

form in one or another shape, according to the sex, age, or temperament of the person, and, if we are capable of fear, will readily find terrors. The covetousness or the malignity which saddens me when I ascribe it to society is my own. I am always environed by myself. On the other part, rectitude is a perpetual victory, celebrated not by cries of joy, but by serenity, which is joy fixed or habitual. It is disgraceful to fly to events for confirmation of our truth and worth. The capitalist does not run every hour to the broker to coin his advantages into current money of the realm; he is satisfied to read in the quotations of the market that his stocks have risen. The same transport which the occurrence of the best events in the best order would occasion me, I must learn to taste purer in the perception that my position is every hour meliorated, and does already command those events I desire. That exultation is only to be checked by the foresight of an order of things so excellent as to throw all our prosperities into the deepest shade.

The face which character wears to me is self-sufficingness. I revere the person who is riches; so that I cannot think of him as alone, or poor, or exiled, or unhappy, or a client, but as perpetual patron, benefactor, and beatified man. Character is centrality, the impossibility of being displaced or overset. A man should give us a sense of mass. Society is frivolous, and shreds its day into scraps, its conversation into ceremonies and escapes. But if I go to see an ingenious man, I shall think myself poorly entertained if he give me nimble pieces of benevolence and etiquette; rather he shall stand stoutly in his place and let me apprehend if it were only his resistance; know that I have encountered a new and positive quality—great refreshment for both of us. It is much that he does not accept the conventional opinions and practices. That nonconformity will remain a goad and remembrancer, and every inquirer will have to dispose of him, in the first place. There is nothing real or useful that is not a seat of war. Our houses ring with laughter and personal and critical gossip, but it helps little. But the uncivil, unavailable man, who is a problem and a threat to society, whom it cannot let pass in silence, but must either worship or hate—and to whom all parties feel related, both the leaders of opinion and the obscure and eccentric—he helps; he puts America and Europe in the wrong, and destroys the scepticism which says, "Man is a doll, let us eat and drink, 'tis the best we can do," by illuminating the untried and unknown. Acquiescence in the establishment and appeal to the public indicate infirm faith, heads which are not clear, and which must see a house built, before they can comprehend the plan of it. The wise man not only leaves out of his thought the many, but leaves out the few. Fountains, the self-moved, the absorbed, the commander because he is commanded, the assured, the primary—they are good; for these announce the instant presence of supreme power.

Our action should rest mathematically on our substance. In nature there are no false valuations. A pound of water in the ocean-tempest has no more gravity than in a midsummer pond. All things work exactly according to their quality and according to their quantity; attempt nothing they cannot do, except man only. He has pretension; he wishes and attempts things beyond his force. I read in a book of English memoirs: "Mr. Fox (afterwards Lord Holland) said, he must have the Treasury; he had served up to it, and would have it." Xenophon and his Ten Thousand were quite equal to what they attempted, and did it; so equal, that it was not suspected to be a grand and inimitable exploit. Yet there stands that fact unrepeated, a high-water mark in military history. Many have attempted it since, and not been equal to it. It is only on reality that any power of action can be based. No institution will be better than the institutor. I knew an amiable and accomplished

person who undertook a practical reform, yet I was never able to find in him the enterprise of love he took in hand. He adopted it by ear and by the understanding from the books he had been reading. All his action was tentative, a piece of the city carried out into the fields, and was the city still, and no new fact, and could not inspire enthusiasm. Had there been something latent in the man, a terrible undemonstrated genius agitating and embarrassing his demeanour, we had watched for its advent. It is not enough that the intellect should see the evils and their remedy. We shall still postpone our existence, nor take the ground to which we are entitled, while it is only a thought and not a spirit that incites us. We have not yet served up to it.

These are properties of life, and another trait is the notice of incessant growth. Men should be intelligent and earnest. They must also make us feel that they have a controlling happy future opening before them, whose early twilights already kindle in the passing hour. The hero is misconceived and misreported; he cannot, therefore, wait to unravel any man's blunders; he is again on his road, adding new powers and honours to his domain and new claims on your heart, which will bankrupt you if you have loitered about the old things and have not kept your relation to him by adding to your wealth. New actions are the only apologies and explanations of old ones which the noble can bear to offer or to receive. If your friend has displeased you, you shall not sit down to consider it, for he has already lost all memory of the passage, and has doubled his power to serve you, and ere you can rise up again will burden you with blessings.

We have no pleasure in thinking of a benevolence that is only measured by its works. Love is inexhaustible, and if its estate is wasted, its granary emptied, still cheers and enriches, and the man, though he sleep, seems to purify the air and his house to adorn the landscape and strengthen the laws. People always recognise this difference. We know who is benevolent by quite other means than the amount of subscription to soup-societies. It is only low merit that can be enumerated. Fear, when your friends say to you what you have done well, and say it through; but when they stand with uncertain timid looks of respect and half-dislike, and must suspend their judgment for years to come, you may begin to hope. Those who live to the future must always appear selfish to those who live to the present. Therefore, it was droll in the good Riemer, who has written memoirs of Goethe, to make out a list of his donations and good deeds, as so many hundred thalers given to Stilling, to Hegel, to Tischbein; a lucrative place found for Professor Voss, a post under the Grand Duke for Herder, a pension for Meyer, two professors recommended to foreign universities, etc. The longest list of specifications of benefit would look very short. A man is a poor creature if he is to be measured so. For all these, of course, are exceptions, and the rule and hodiernal life of a good man is benefaction. The true charity of Goethe is to be inferred from the account he gave Dr. Eckermann of the way in which he had spent his fortune. "Each *bon-mot* of mine has cost a purse of gold. Half a million of my own money, the fortune I inherited, my salary and the large income derived from my writings for fifty years back, have been expended to instruct me in what I now know. I have besides seen," etc.

I own it is but poor chat and gossip to go to enumerate traits of this simple and rapid power, and we are painting the lightning with charcoal; but in these long nights and vacations I like to console myself so. Nothing but itself can copy it. A word warm from the heart enriches me. I surrender at discretion. How death-cold is literary genius before this fire of life! These are the touches that reanimate my heavy soul and give it eyes to pierce the dark of nature. I find, where I thought

myself poor, there was I most rich. Thence comes a new intellectual exaltation, to be again rebuked by some new exhibition of character. Strange alternation of attraction and repulsion! Character repudiates intellect, yet excites it; and character passes into thought, is published so, and then is ashamed before new flashes of moral worth.

Character is nature in the highest form. It is of no use to ape it or to contend with it. Somewhat is possible of resistance, and of persistence, and of creation, to this power, which will foil all emulation.

This masterpiece is best where no hands but nature's have been laid on it. Care is taken that the greatly-destined shall slip up into life in the shade, with no thousand-eyed Athens to watch and blazon every new thought, every blushing emotion of young genius. Two persons lately, very young children of the most high God, have given me occasion for thought. When I explored the source of their sanctity and charm for the imagination, it seemed as if each answered: "From my nonconformity; I never listened to your people's law, or to what they call their gospel, and wasted my time. I was content with the simple rural poverty of my own; hence this sweetness; my work never reminds you of that—is pure of that." And nature advertises me in such persons that in democratic America she will not be democratised. How cloistered and constitutionally sequestered from the market and from scandal! It was only this morning that I sent away some wild flowers of these wood-gods. They are a relief from literature—these fresh draughts from the sources of thought and sentiment; as we read, in an age of polish and criticism, the first lines of written prose and verse of a nation. How captivating is their devotion to their favourite books, whether Æschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, or Scott, as feeling that they have a stake in that book; who touches that, touches them—and especially the total solitude of the critic, the Patmos of thought from which he writes, in unconsciousness of any eyes that shall ever read this writing. Could they dream on still, as angels, and not wake to comparisons and to be flattered! Yet some natures are too good to be spoiled by praise, and wherever the vein of thought reaches down into the profound, there is no danger from vanity. Solemn friends will warn them of the danger of the head's being turned by the flourish of trumpets, but they can afford to smile. I remember the indignation of an eloquent Methodist at the kind admonitions of a Doctor of Divinity: "My friend, a man can neither be praised nor insulted." But forgive the counsels; they are very natural. I remember the thought which occurred to me when some ingenious and spiritual foreigners came to America, was, Have you been victimised in being brought hither?—or, prior to that, answer me this, "Are you victimisable?"

As I have said, Nature keeps these sovereignties in her own hands, and however pertly our sermons and disciplines would divide some share of credit, and teach that the laws fashion the citizen, she goes her own gait and puts the wisest in the wrong. She makes very light of gospels and prophets, as one who has a great many more to produce and no excess of time to spare on any one. There is a class of men, individuals of which appear at long intervals, so eminently endowed with insight and virtue that they have been unanimously saluted as *divine*, and who seem to be an accumulation of that power we consider. Divine persons are character born, or, to borrow a phrase from Napoleon, they are victory organised. They are usually received with ill-will, because they are new and because they set a bound to the exaggeration that has been made of the personality of the last divine person. Nature never rhymes her children, nor makes two men alike. When we see a great man we fancy a resemblance to some historical person, and predict the sequel of his character and fortune; a

result which he is sure to disappoint. None will ever solve the problem of his character according to our prejudice, but only in his own high, unprecedented way. Character wants room; must not be crowded on by persons, nor be judged from glimpses got in the press of affairs or on few occasions. It needs perspective, as a great building. It may not, probably does not, form relations rapidly; and we should not require rash explanation, either on the popular ethics or on our own, of its action.

I look on Sculpture as history. I do not think the Apollo and the Jove impossible in flesh and blood. Every trait which the artist recorded in stone he had seen in life, and better than his copy. We have seen many counterfeits, but we are born believers in great men. How easily we read in old books, when men were few, of the smallest action of the patriarchs. We require that a man should be so large and columnar in the landscape that it should deserve to be recorded that he arose, and girded up his loins, and departed to such a place. The most credible pictures are those of majestic men who prevailed at their entrance, and convinced the senses; as happened to the eastern magian who was sent to test the merits of Zertusht or Zoroaster. When the Yunani sage arrived at Balkh, the Persians tell us, Gushtasp appointed a day on which the Mobeds of every country should assemble, and a golden chair was placed for the Yunani sage. Then the beloved of Yezdam, the prophet Zertusht, advanced into the midst of the assembly. The Yunani sage, on seeing that chief, said: "This form and this gait cannot lie, and nothing but truth can proceed from them." Plato said it was impossible not to believe in the children of the gods, "though they should speak without probable or necessary arguments." I should think myself very unhappy in my associates if I could not credit the best things in history. "John Bradshaw," says Milton, "appears like a consul, from whom the fasces are not to depart with the year; so that not on the tribunal only, but throughout his life, you would regard him as sitting in judgment upon kings." I find it more credible, since it is anterior information, that one man should *know heaven*, as the Chinese say, than that so many men should know the world. "The virtuous prince confronts the gods without any misgiving. He waits a hundred ages till a sage comes, and does not doubt. He who confronts the gods, without any misgiving, knows heaven; he who waits a hundred ages until a sage comes, without doubting, knows men. Hence the virtuous prince moves, and for ages shows empire the way." But there is no need to seek remote examples. He is a dull observer whose experience has not taught him the reality and force of magic, as well as of chemistry. The coldest precisian cannot go abroad without encountering inexplicable influences. One man fastens an eye on him, and the graves of the memory render up their dead; the secrets that make him wretched either to keep or to betray must be yielded; another, and he cannot speak, and the bones of his body seem to lose their cartilages; the entrance of a friend adds grace, boldness, and eloquence to him; and there are persons he cannot choose but remember, who gave a transcendent expansion to his thought, and kindled another life in his bosom.

What is so excellent as strict relations of amity, when they spring from this deep root? The sufficient reply to the sceptic who doubts the power and the furniture of man is in that possibility of joyful intercourse with persons which makes the faith and practice of all reasonable men. I know nothing which life has to offer so satisfying as the profound good understanding which can subsist, after much exchange of good offices, between two virtuous men, each of whom is sure of himself and sure of his friend. It is a happiness which postpones all other gratifications, and makes politics and commerce and churches cheap. For when men shall meet as they ought,

each a benefactor, a shower of stars, clothed with thoughts, with deeds, with accomplishments, it should be the festival of nature which all things announce. Of such friendship, love in the sexes is the first symbol, as all other things are symbols of love. Those relations to the best men, which, at one time, we reckoned the romances of youth, become, in the progress of the character, the most solid enjoyment.

If it were possible to live in right relations with men!—if we could abstain from asking anything of them, from asking their praise, or help, or pity, and content us with compelling them through the virtue of the eldest laws! Could we not deal with a few persons—with one person—after the unwritten statutes, and make an experiment of their efficacy? Could we not pay our friend the compliment of truth, of silence, of forbearing? Need we be so eager to seek him? If we are related, we shall meet. It was a tradition of the ancient world that no metamorphosis could hide a god from a god; and there is a Greek verse which runs:—

"The Gods are to each other not unknown."

Friends also follow the laws of divine necessity; they gravitate to each other, and cannot otherwise:—

"When each the other shall avoid,
Shall each by each be most enjoyed."

Their relation is not made, but allowed. The gods must seat themselves without seneschal in our Olympus, and as they can instal themselves by seniority divine. Society is spoiled if pains are taken, if the associates are brought a mile to meet. And if it be not society, it is a mischievous, low, degrading jangle, though made up of the best. All the greatness of each is kept back and every foible in painful activity, as if the Olympians should meet to exchange snuff-boxes.

Life goes headlong. We chase some flying scheme, or we are hunted by some fear or command behind us. But if suddenly we encounter a friend, we pause; our heat and hurry look foolish enough; now pause, now possession, is required, and the power to swell the moment from the resources of the heart. The moment is all, in all noble relations.

A divine person is the prophecy of the mind; a friend is the hope of the heart. Our beatitude waits for the fulfilment of these two in one. The ages are opening this moral force. All force is the shadow or symbol of that. Poetry is joyful and strong as it draws its inspiration thence. Men write their names on the world as they are filled with this. History has been mean; our nations have been mobs; we have never seen a man; that divine form we do not yet know, but only the dream and prophecy of such; we do not know the majestic manners which belong to him, which appease and exalt the beholder. We shall one day see that the most private is the most public energy, that quality atones for quantity, and grandeur of character acts in the dark, and succours them who never saw it. What greatness has yet appeared is beginnings and encouragements to us in this direction. The history of those gods and saints which the world has written and then worshipped are documents of character. The ages have exulted in the manners of a youth who owed nothing to fortune, and who was hanged at the Tyburn of his nation, who, by the pure quality of his nature, shed an epic splendour around the facts of his death which has transfigured every particular into an universal symbol for the eyes of mankind. This great defeat is hitherto our highest fact. But the mind requires a victory to the senses; a force of character which will convert judge, jury, soldier, and king; which will rule animal and mineral virtues, and blend with the courses of sap, of rivers, of winds, of stars, and of moral agents.

If we cannot attain at a bound to these grandeurs, at least let us do them homage. In society high advantages are set down to the possessor as disadvantages. It requires the more wariness in our private estimates. I do not

forgive in my friends the failure to know a fine character and to entertain it with thankful hospitality. When at last that which we have always longed for is arrived and shines on us with glad rays out of that far celestial land, then to be coarse, then to be critical and treat such a visitant with the jabber and suspicion of the streets, argues a vulgarity that seems to shut the doors of heaven. This is confusion, this the right insanity, when the soul no longer knows its own, nor where its allegiance, its religion, are due. Is there any religion but this, to know that wherever in the wide desert of being the holy sentiment we cherish has opened into a flower, it blooms for me? if none sees it, I see it; I am aware, if I alone, of the greatness of the fact. While it blooms I will keep sabbath or holy time, and suspend my gloom and my folly and jokes. Nature is indulged by the presence of this guest. There are many eyes that can detect and honour the prudent and household virtues; there are many that can discern Genius on his starry track, though the mob is incapable; but when that love which is all-suffering, all-abstaining, all-aspiring, which has vowed to itself that it will be a wretch and also a fool in this world sooner than soil its white hands by any compliances, comes into our streets and houses—only the pure and aspiring can know its face, and the only compliment they can pay it is to own it.

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# MAN THE REFORMER[1]

Mr. President and Gentlemen,

I wish to offer to your consideration some thoughts on the particular and general relations of man as a reformer. I shall assume that the aim of each young man in this Association is the very highest that belongs to a rational mind. Let it be granted that our life, as we lead it, is common and mean; that some of those offices and functions for which we were mainly created are grown so rare in society that the memory of them is only kept alive in old books and in dim traditions; that prophets and poets, that beautiful and perfect men, we are not now—no, nor have even seen such; that some sources of human instruction are almost unnamed and unknown among us; that the community in which we live will hardly bear to be told that every man should be open to ecstasy or a divine illumination, and his daily walk elevated by intercourse with the spiritual world. Grant all this, as we must, yet I suppose none of my auditors will deny that we ought to seek to establish ourselves in such disciplines and courses as will deserve that guidance and clearer communication with the spiritual nature. And further, I will not dissemble my hope that each person whom I address has felt his own call to cast aside all evil customs, timidities, and limitations, and to be in his place a free and helpful man, a reformer, a benefactor, not content to slip along through the world like a footman or a spy, escaping by his nimbleness and apologies as many knocks as he can, but a brave and upright man, who must find or cut a straight road to everything excellent in the earth, and not only go

[1] A lecture read before the Mechanics' Apprentices' Library Association, Boston, January 25th, 1841.

honourably himself, but make it easier for all who follow him to go in honour and with benefit.

In the history of the world the doctrine of Reform had never such scope as at the present hour. Lutherans, Hernhutters, Jesuits, Monks, Quakers, Knox, Wesley, Swedenborg, Bentham, in their accusations of Society, all respected something —Church or State, literature or history, domestic usages, the market town, the dinner table, coined money. But now all these and all things else hear the trumpet, and must rush to judgment—Christianity, the laws, commerce, schools, the farm, the laboratory; and not a kingdom, town, statute, rite, calling, man, or woman, but is threatened by the new spirit.

What if some of the objections whereby our institutions are assailed are extreme and speculative, and the reformers tend to idealism? That only shows the extravagance of the abuses which have driven the mind into the opposite extreme. It is when your facts and persons grow unreal and fantastic by too much falsehood that the scholar flies for refuge to the world of ideas, and aims to recruit and replenish nature from that source. Let ideas establish their legitimate sway again in society, let life be fair and poetic, and the scholars will gladly be lovers, citizens, and philanthropists.

It will afford no security from the new ideas that the old nations, the laws of centuries, the property and institutions of a hundred cities, are built on other foundations. The demon of reform has a secret door into the heart of every lawmaker, of every inhabitant of every city. The fact that a new thought and hope have dawned in your breast should apprise you that in the same hour a new light broke in upon a thousand private hearts. That secret which you would fain keep, as soon as you go abroad, lo! there is one standing on the doorstep to tell you the same. There is not the most bronzed and sharpened money-catcher who does not, to your consternation almost, quail and shake the moment he hears a question prompted by the new ideas. We thought he had some semblance of ground to stand upon, that such as he at least would die hard; but he trembles and flees. Then the scholar says: "Cities and coaches shall never impose on me again; for behold every solitary dream of mine is rushing to fulfilment. That fancy I had, and hesitated to utter because you would laugh—the broker, the attorney, the market-man, are saying the same thing. Had I waited a day longer to speak, I had been too late. Behold, State Street thinks, and Wall Street doubts, and begins to prophesy!"

It cannot be wondered at that this general inquest into abuses should arise in the bosom of society, when one considers the practical impediments that stand in the way of virtuous young men. The young man, on entering life, finds the way to lucrative employments blocked with abuses. The ways of trade are grown selfish to the borders of theft, and supple to the borders (if not beyond the borders) of fraud. The employments of commerce are not intrinsically unfit for a man, or less genial to his faculties; but these are now in their general course so vitiated by derelictions and abuses at which all connive that it requires more vigour and resources than can be expected of every young man to right himself in them; he is lost in them; he cannot move hand or foot in them. Has he genius and virtue? the less does he find them fit for him to grow in; and if he would thrive in them, he must sacrifice all the brilliant dreams of boyhood and youth as dreams; he must forget the prayers of his childhood, and must take on him the harness of routine and obsequiousness. If not so minded, nothing is left him but to begin the world anew, as he does who puts the spade into the ground for food. We are all implicated, of course, in this charge; it is only necessary to ask a few questions as to the progress of the articles of commerce from the fields where they grew, to our

houses, to become aware that we eat and drink and wear perjury and fraud in a hundred commodities. How many articles of daily consumption are furnished us from the West Indies; yet it is said that in the Spanish islands the venality of the officers of the government has passed into usage, and that no article passes into our ships which has not been fraudulently cheapened. In the Spanish islands every agent or factor of the Americans, unless he be a consul, has taken oath that he is a Catholic, or has caused a priest to make that declaration for him. The abolitionist has shown us our dreadful debt to the southern negro. In the island of Cuba, in addition to the ordinary abominations of slavery, it appears only men are bought for the plantations, and one dies in ten every year, of these miserable bachelors, to yield us sugar. I leave for those who have the knowledge the part of sifting the oaths of our custom-houses; I will not inquire into the oppression of the sailors; I will not pry into the usages of our retail trade. I content myself with the fact that the general system of our trade (apart from the blacker traits, which, I hope, are exceptions denounced and unshared by all reputable men) is a system of selfishness; is not dictated by the high sentiments of human nature; is not measured by the exact law of reciprocity, much less by the sentiments of love and heroism, but is a system of distrust, of concealment, of superior keenness, not of giving but of taking advantage. It is not that which a man delights to unlock to a noble friend; which he meditates on with joy and self-approval in his hour of love and aspiration; but rather what he then puts out of sight, only showing the brilliant result, and atoning for the manner of acquiring, by the manner of expending it. I do not charge the merchant or the manufacturer. The sins of our trade belong to no class, to no individual. One plucks, one distributes, one eats. Everybody partakes, everybody confesses — with cap and knee volunteers his confession, yet none feels himself accountable. He did not create the abuse; he cannot alter it. What is he? An obscure private person who must get his bread. That is the vice—that no one feels himself called to act for man, but only as a fraction of man. It happens, therefore, that all such ingenuous souls as feel within themselves the irrepressible strivings of a noble aim, who by the law of their nature must act simply, find these ways of trade unfit for them, and they come forth from it. Such cases are becoming more numerous every year.

But by coming out of trade you have not cleared yourself. The trail of the serpent reaches into all the lucrative professions and practices of man. Each has its own wrongs. Each finds a tender and very intelligent conscience a disqualification for success. Each requires of the practitioner a certain shutting of the eyes, a certain dapperness and compliance, an acceptance of customs, a sequestration from the sentiments of generosity and love, a compromise of private opinion and lofty integrity. Nay, the evil custom reaches into the whole institution of property, until our laws which establish and protect it seem not to be the issue of love and reason, but of selfishness. Suppose a man is so unhappy as to be born a saint, with keen perceptions, but with the conscience and love of an angel, and he is to get his living in the world; he finds himself excluded from all lucrative works; he has no farm, and he cannot get one; for to earn money enough to buy one requires a sort of concentration towards money, which is the selling himself for a number of years, and to him the present hour is as sacred and inviolable as any future hour. Of course, while another man has no land, my title to mine, your title to yours, is at once vitiated. Inextricable seem to be the twinings and tendrils of this evil, and we all involve ourselves in it the deeper by forming connections, by wives and children, by benefits and debts.

Considerations of this kind have

turned the attention of many philanthropic and intelligent persons to the claims of manual labour, as a part of the education of every young man. If the accumulated wealth of the past generation is thus tainted—no matter how much of it is offered to us—we must begin to consider if it were not the nobler part to renounce it, and to put ourselves into primary relations with the soil and nature, and, abstaining from whatever is dishonest and unclean, to take each of us bravely his part, with his own hands, in the manual labour of the world.

But it is said, "What! will you give up the immense advantages reaped from the division of labour, and set every man to make his own shoes, bureau, knife, wagon, sails, and needle? This would be to put men back into barbarism by their own act." I see no instant prospect of a virtuous revolution; yet I confess I should not be pained at a change which threatened a loss of some of the luxuries or conveniences of society, if it proceeded from a preference of the agricultural life out of the belief that our primary duties as men could be better discharged in that calling. Who could regret to see a high conscience and a purer taste exercising a sensible effect on young men in their choice of occupation, and thinning the ranks of competition in the labours of commerce, of law, and of State? It is easy to see that the inconvenience would last but a short time. This would be great action, which always opens the eyes of men. When many persons shall have done this, when the majority shall admit the necessity of reform in all these institutions, their abuses will be redressed, and the way will be open again to the advantages which arise from the division of labour, and a man may select the fittest employment for his peculiar talent again, without compromise.

But quite apart from the emphasis which the times give to the doctrine that the manual labour of society ought to be shared among all the members, there are reasons proper to every individual why he should not be deprived of it. The use of manual labour is one which never grows obsolete, and which is inapplicable to no person. A man should have a farm or a mechanical craft for his culture. We must have a basis for our higher accomplishments, our delicate entertainments of poetry and philosophy, in the work of our hands. We must have an antagonism in the tough world for all the variety of our spiritual faculties, or they will not be born. Manual labour is the study of the external world. The advantage of riches remains with him who procured them, not with the heir. When I go into my garden with a spade, and dig a bed, I feel such an exhilaration and health that I discover that I have been defrauding myself all this time in letting others do for me what I should have done with my own hands. But not only health, but education, is in the work. Is it possible that I, who get indefinite quantities of sugar, hominy, cotton, buckets, crockery ware, and letter-paper, by simply signing my name once in three months to a cheque in favour of John Smith & Co., traders, get the fair share of exercise to my faculties by that act which nature intended for me in making all these far-fetched matters important to my comfort? It is Smith himself, and his carriers, and dealers, and manufacturers; it is the sailor, the hidedrogher, the butcher, the negro, the hunter, and the planter, who have intercepted the sugar of the sugar, and the cotton of the cotton. They have got the education, I only the commodity. This were all very well if I were necessarily absent, being detained by work of my own, like theirs, work of the same faculties; then should I be sure of my hands and feet; but now I feel some shame before my woodchopper, my ploughman, and my cook, for they have some sort of self-sufficiency, they can contrive without my aid to bring the day and year round, but I depend on them, and have not earned by use a right to my arms and feet.

Consider further the difference between the first and second owner of property.

Every species of property is preyed on by its own enemies, as iron by rust; timber by rot; cloth by moths; provisions by mould, putridity, or vermin; money by thieves; an orchard by insects; a planted field by weeds and the inroad of cattle; a stock of cattle by hunger; a road by rain and frost; a bridge by freshets. And whoever takes any of these things into his possession takes the charge of defending them from this troop of enemies, or of keeping them in repair. A man who supplies his own want, who builds a raft or a boat to go a-fishing, finds it easy to caulk it, or put in a thole-pin, or mend the rudder. What he gets only as fast as he wants for his own ends does not embarrass him, or take away his sleep with looking after. But when he comes to give all the goods he has year after year collected, in one estate to his son — house, orchard, ploughed land, cattle, bridges, hardware, wooden-ware, carpets, cloths, provisions, books, money—and cannot give him the skill and experience which made or collected these, and the method and place they have in his own life, the son finds his hands full—not to use these things, but to look after them and defend them from their natural enemies. To him they are not means, but masters. Their enemies will not remit; rust, mould, vermin, rain, sun, freshet, fire, all seize their own, fill him with vexation, and he is converted from the owner into a watchman or a watch-dog to this magazine of old and new chattels. What a change! Instead of the masterly good humour and sense of power and fertility of resource in himself; instead of those strong and learned hands, those piercing and learned eyes, that supple body, and that mighty and prevailing heart which the father had, whom nature loved and feared, whom snow and rain, water and land, beast and fish, seemed all to know and to serve—we have now a puny, protected person, guarded by walls and curtains, stoves and down beds, coaches, and men-servants and women-servants from the earth and the sky, and who, bred to depend on all these, is made anxious by all that endangers those possessions, and is forced to spend so much time in guarding them, that he has quite lost sight of their original use; namely, to help him to his ends—to the prosecution of his love, to the helping of his friend, to the worship of his God, to the enlargement of his knowledge, to the serving of his country, to the indulgence of his sentiment; and he is now what is called a rich man—the menial and runner of his riches.

Hence it happens that the whole interest of history lies in the fortunes of the poor. Knowledge, Virtue, Power, are the victories of man over his necessities, his march to the dominion of the world. Every man ought to have this opportunity to conquer the world for himself. Only such persons interest us, Spartans, Romans, Saracens, English, Americans, who have stood in the jaws of need, and have by their own wit and might extricated themselves, and made man victorious.

I do not wish to overstate this doctrine of labour, or insist that every man should be a farmer, any more than that every man should be a lexicographer. In general one may say that the husbandman's is the oldest and most universal profession, and that where a man does not yet discover in himself any fitness for one work more than another, this may be preferred. But the doctrine of the Farm is merely this, that every man ought to stand in primary relations with the work of the world; ought to do it himself, and not to suffer the accident of his having a purse in his pocket, or his having been bred to some dishonourable and injurious craft, to sever him from those duties; and for this reason, that labour is God's education; that he only is a sincere learner, he only can become a master, who learns the secrets of labour, and who, by real cunning, extorts from nature its sceptre.

Neither would I shut my ears to the plea of the learned professions, of the poet, the priest, the lawgiver, and men of

study generally; namely, that, in the experience of all men of that class, the amount of manual labour which is necessary to the maintenance of a family indisposes and disqualifies for intellectual exertion. I know it often, perhaps usually, happens that where there is a fine organisation, apt for poetry and philosophy, that individual finds himself compelled to wait on his thoughts; to waste several days that he may enhance and glorify one; and is better taught by a moderate and dainty exercise, such as rambling in the fields, rowing, skating, hunting, than by the downright drudgery of the farmer and the smith. I would not quite forget the venerable counsel of the Egyptian mysteries which declared that "there were two pairs of eyes in man, and it is requisite that the pair which are beneath should be closed when the pair that are above them perceive, and that when the pair above are closed those which are beneath should be opened." Yet I will suggest that no separation from labour can be without some loss of power and of truth to the seer himself; that, I doubt not, the faults and vices of our literature and philosophy; their too-great fineness, effeminacy, and melancholy, are attributable to the enervated and sickly habits of the literary class. Better that the book should not be quite so good, and the bookmaker abler and better, and not himself often a ludicrous contrast to all that he has written.

But, granting that for ends so sacred and dear some relaxation must be had, I think that if a man find in himself any strong bias to poetry, to art, to the contemplative life, drawing him to these things with a devotion incompatible with good husbandry, that man ought to reckon early with himself, and, respecting the compensations of the Universe, ought to ransom himself from the duties of economy by a certain rigour and privation in his habits. For privileges so rare and grand let him not stint to pay a great tax. Let him be a cænobite, a pauper, and if need be celibate also. Let him learn to eat his meals standing, and to relish the taste of fair water and black bread. He may leave to others the costly conveniences of housekeeping, and large hospitality, and the possession of works of art. Let him feel that genius is a hospitality, and that he who can create works of art needs not collect them. He must live in a chamber, and postpone his self-indulgence, forewarned and forearmed against that frequent misfortune of men of genius—the taste for luxury. This is the tragedy of genius: attempting to drive along the ecliptic with one horse of the heavens and one horse of the earth, there is only discord and ruin and downfall to chariot and charioteer.

The duty that every man should assume his own vows, should call the institutions of society to account, and examine their fitness to him, gains in emphasis if we look at our modes of living. Is our housekeeping sacred and honourable? Does it raise and inspire us, or does it cripple us instead? I ought to be armed by every part and function of my household, by all my social function, by my economy, by my feasting, by my voting, by my traffic. Yet I am almost no party to any of these things. Custom does it for me, gives me no power therefrom, and runs me in debt to boot. We spend our incomes for paint and paper, for a hundred trifles, I know not what, and not for the things of a man. Our expense is almost all for conformity. It is for cake that we run in debt; it is not the intellect, not the heart, not beauty, not worship, that costs so much. Why needs any man be rich? Why must he have horses, fine garments, handsome apartments, access to public houses and places of amusement? Only for want of thought. Give his mind a new image, and he flees into a solitary garden or garret to enjoy it, and is richer with that dream than the fee of a county could make him. But we are first thoughtless, and then find that we are moneyless. We are first sensual, and then must be rich. We dare not trust our wit for making our

house pleasant to our friend, and so we buy ice-creams. He is accustomed to carpets, and we have not sufficient character to put floor cloths out of his mind while he stays in the house, and so we pile the floor with carpets. Let the house rather be a temple of the Furies of Lacedæmon, formidable and holy to all, which none but a Spartan may enter or so much as behold. As soon as there is faith, as soon as there is society, comfits and cushions will be left to slaves. Expense will be inventive and heroic. We shall eat hard and lie hard, we shall dwell like the ancient Romans in narrow tenements, while our public edifices, like theirs, will be worthy for their proportion of the landscape in which we set them, for conversation, for art, for music, for worship. We shall be rich to great purposes; poor only for selfish ones.

Now, what help for these evils? How can the man who has learned but one art procure all the conveniences of life honestly? Shall we say all we think?—Perhaps with his own hands. Suppose he collects or makes them ill—yet he has learned their lesson. If he cannot do that?—Then perhaps he can go without. Immense wisdom and riches are in that. It is better to go without than to have them at too great a cost. Let us learn the meaning of economy. Economy is a high, humane office, a sacrament, when its aim is grand; when it is the prudence of simple tastes, when it is practised for freedom, or love, or devotion. Much of the economy which we see in houses is of a base origin, and is best kept out of sight. Parched corn eaten to-day, that I may have roast fowl to my dinner on Sunday, is a baseness; but parched corn and a house with one apartment, that I may be free of all perturbations, that I may be serene and docile to what the mind shall speak, and girt and road-ready for the lowest mission of knowledge or goodwill, is frugality for gods and heroes.

Can we not learn the lesson of self-help? Society is full of infirm people, who incessantly summon others to serve them. They contrive everywhere to exhaust for their single comfort the entire means and appliances of that luxury to which our invention has yet attained. Sofas, ottomans, stoves, wine, game-fowl, spices, perfumes, rides, the theatre, entertainments—all these they want, they need, and whatever can be suggested more than these they crave also, as if it was the bread which should keep them from starving; and if they miss any one, they represent themselves as the most wronged and most wretched persons on earth. One must have been born and bred with them to know how to prepare a meal for their learned stomach. Meantime they never bestir themselves to serve another person; not they! they have a great deal more to do for themselves than they can possibly perform, nor do they once perceive the cruel joke of their lives; but the more odious they grow, the sharper is the tone of their complaining and craving. Can anything be so elegant as to have few wants and to serve them one's self, so as to have somewhat left to give, instead of being always prompt to grab? It is more elegant to answer one's own needs than to be richly served; inelegant perhaps it may look to-day, and to a few, but it is an elegance forever and to all.

I do not wish to be absurd and pedantic in reform. I do not wish to push my criticism on the state of things around me to that extravagant mark that shall compel me to suicide, or to an absolute isolation from the advantages of civil society. If we suddenly plant our foot and say, I will neither eat nor drink nor wear nor touch any food or fabric which I do not know to be innocent, or deal with any person whose whole manner of life is not clear and rational, we shall stand still. Whose is so? Not mine; not thine; not his. But I think we must clear ourselves each one by the interrogation, whether we have earned our bread to-day by the haerty contribution of our energies to the common benefit; and we must not cease to *tend*

to the correction of flagrant wrongs by laying one stone aright every day.

But the idea which now begins to agitate society has a wider scope than our daily employments, our households, and the institutions of property. We are to revise the whole of our social structure—the State, the school, religion, marriage, trade, science, and explore their foundations in our own nature; we are to see that the world not only fitted the former men, but fits us, and to clear ourselves of every usage which has not its roots in our own mind. What is a man born for but to be a Reformer, a Re-maker of what man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good, imitating that great Nature which embosoms us all, and which sleeps no moment on an old past, but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day, and with every pulsation a new life? Let him renounce everything which is not true to him, and put all his practices back on their first thoughts, and do nothing for which he has not the whole world for his reason. If there are inconveniences and what is called ruin in the way, because we have so enervated and maimed ourselves, yet it would be like dying of perfumes to sink in the effort to re-attach the deeds of every day to the holy and mysterious recesses of life.

The power which is at once spring and regulator in all efforts of reform is the conviction that there is an infinite worthiness in man, which will appear at the call of worth, and that all particular reforms are the removing of some impediment. Is it not the highest duty that man should be honoured in us? I ought not to allow any man, because he has broad lands, to feel that he is rich in my presence. I ought to make him feel that I can do without his riches, that I cannot be bought—neither by comfort, neither by pride—and though I be utterly penniless, and receiving bread from him, that he is the poor man beside me. And if, at the same time, a woman or a child discovers a sentiment of piety, or a juster way of thinking than mine, I ought to confess it by my respect and obedience, though it go to alter my whole way of life.

The Americans have many virtues, but they have not Faith and Hope. I know no two words whose meaning is more lost sight of. We use these words as if they were as obsolete as Selah and Amen. And yet they have the broadest meaning, and the most cogent application to Boston in this year. The Americans have little faith. They rely on the power of a dollar; they are deaf to a sentiment. They think you may talk the north wind down as easily as raise society; and no class more faithless than the scholars or intellectual men. Now, if I talk with a sincere wise man, and my friend, with a poet, with a conscientious youth who is still under the dominion of his own wild thoughts, and not yet harnessed in the team of society to drag with us all in the ruts of custom, I see at once how paltry is all this generation of unbelievers, and what a house of cards their institutions are, and I see what one brave man, what one great thought executed, might effect. I see that the reason of the distrust of the practical man in all theory is his inability to perceive the means whereby we work. Look, he says, at the tools with which this world of yours is to be built. As we cannot make a planet, with atmosphere, rivers, and forests, by means of the best carpenters' or engineers' tools, with chemist's laboratory and smith's forge to boot—so neither can we ever construct that heavenly society you prate of out of foolish, sick, selfish men and women, such as we know them to be. But the believer not only beholds his heaven to be possible, but already to begin to exist—not by the men or materials the statesman uses, but by men transfigured and raised above themselves by the power of principles. To principles something else is possible that transcends all the power of expedients.

Every great and commanding moment in the annals of the world is the triumph of some enthusiasm. The victories of the Arabs after Mohammed, who, in a few

years, from a small and mean beginning, established a larger empire than that of Rome, is an example. They did they knew not what. The naked Derar, horsed on an idea, was found an overmatch for a troop of Roman cavalry. The women fought like men, and conquered the Roman men. They were miserably equipped, miserably fed. They were temperance troops. There was neither brandy nor flesh needed to feed them. They conquered Asia, and Africa, and Spain, on barley. The Caliph Omar's walking-stick struck more terror into those who saw it than another man's sword. His diet was barley bread; his sauce was salt; and oftentimes by way of abstinence he ate his bread without salt. His drink was water. His palace was built of mud; and when he left Medina to go to the conquest of Jerusalem, he rode on a red camel, with a wooden platter hanging at his saddle, with a bottle of water and two sacks, one holding barley, and the other dried fruits.

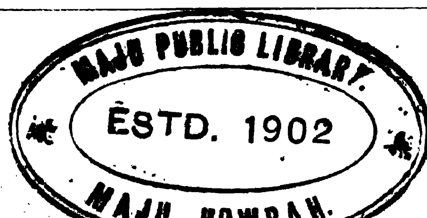
But there will dawn ere long on our politics, on our modes of living, a nobler morning than that Arabian faith, in the sentiment of love. This is the one remedy for all ills, the panacea of nature. We must be lovers, and at once the impossible becomes possible. Our age and history, for these thousand years, has not been the history of kindness, but of selfishness. Our distrust is very expensive. The money we spend for courts and prisons is very ill laid out. We make, by distrust, the thief, and burglar, and incendiary, and by our court and gaol we keep him so. An acceptance of the sentiment of love throughout Christendom for a season would bring the felon and the outcast to our side in tears, with the devotion of his faculties to our service. See this wide society of labouring men and women. We allow ourselves to be served by them, we live apart from them, and meet them without a salute in the streets. We do not greet their talents, nor rejoice in their good fortune, nor foster their hopes, nor in the assembly of the people vote for what is dear to them. Thus we enact the part of the selfish noble and king from the foundation of the world. See, this tree always bears one fruit. In every household, the peace of a pair is poisoned by the malice, slyness, indolence, and alienation of domestics. Let any two matrons meet, and observe how soon their conversation turns on the troubles from their "*help*," as our phrase is. In every knot of labourers the rich man does not feel himself among his friends—and at the polls he finds them arrayed in a mass in distinct opposition to him. We complain that the politics of masses of the people are controlled by designing men, and led in opposition to manifest justice and the common weal, and to their own interest. But the people do not wish to be represented or ruled by the ignorant and base. They only vote for these because they were asked with the voice and semblance of kindness. They will not vote for them long. They inevitably prefer wit and probity. To use an Egyptian metaphor, it is not their will for any long time "to raise the nails of wild beasts, and to depress the heads of the sacred birds." Let our affection flow out to our fellows; it would operate in a day the greatest of all revolutions. It is better to work on institutions by the sun than by the wind. The State must consider the poor man, and all voices must speak for him. Every child that is born must have a just chance for his bread. Let the amelioration in our laws of property proceed from the concession of the rich, not from the grasping of the poor.. Let us begin by habitual imparting. Let us understand that the equitable rule is that no one should take more than his share, let him be ever so rich. Let me feel that I am to be a lover. I am to see to it that the world is the better for me, and to find my reward in the act. Love would put a new face on this weary old world in which we dwell as pagans and enemies too long, and it would warm the heart to see how fast the vain diplomacy of

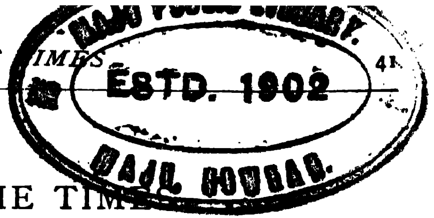
statesmen, the impotence of armies, and navies, and lines of defence, would be superseded by this unarmed child. Love will creep where it cannot go, will accomplish that by imperceptible methods—being its own lever, fulcrum, and power—which force could never achieve. Have you not seen in the woods, in a late autumn morning, a poor fungus or mushroom—a plant without any solidity, nay, that seemed nothing but a soft mush or jelly—by its constant, total, and inconceivably gentle pushing, manage to break its way up through the frosty ground, and actually to lift a hard crust on its head? It is the symbol of the power of kindness. The virtue of this principle in human society in application to great interests is obsolete and forgotten. Once or twice in history it has been tried in illustrious instances, with signal success. This great, overgrown, dead Christendom of ours still keeps alive at least the name of a lover of mankind. But one day all men will be lovers; and every calamity will be dissolved in the universal sunshine.

Will you suffer me to add one trait more to this portrait of man the reformer? The mediator between the spiritual and the actual world should have a great prospective prudence. An Arabian poet describes his hero by saying:—

> "Sunshine was he
> In the winter day,
> And in the midsummer
> Coolness and shade."

He who would help himself and others should not be a subject of irregular and interrupted impulses of virtue, but a continent, persisting, immovable person—such as we have seen a few scattered up and down in time for the blessing of the world; men who have in the gravity of their nature a quality which answers to the fly-wheel in a mill, which distributes the motion equably over all the wheels and hinders it from falling unequally and suddenly in destructive shocks. It is better that joy should be spread over all the day in the form of strength than that it should be concentrated into ecstasies, full of danger and followed by reactions. There is a sublime prudence which is the very highest that we know of man, which, believing in a vast future—sure of more to come than is yet seen—postpones always the present hour to the whole life; postpones talent to genius, and special results to character. As the merchant gladly takes money from his income to add to his capital, so is the great man very willing to lose particular powers and talents, so that he gain in the elevation of his life. The opening of the spiritual senses disposes men ever to greater sacrifices, to leave their signal talents, their best means and skill of procuring a present success, their power and their fame—to cast all things behind, in the insatiable thirst for divine communications. A purer fame, a greater power, rewards the sacrifice. It is the conversion of our harvest into seed. As the farmer casts into the ground the finest ears of his grain, the time will come when we too shall hold nothing back, but shall eagerly convert more than we now possess into means and powers, when we shall be willing to sow the sun and the moon for seeds.






# LECTURE ON THE TIMES

(1841)

THE Times, as we say, or the present aspects of our social state, the Laws, Divinity, Natural Science, Agriculture, Art, Trade, Letters, have their root in an invisible spiritual reality. To appear in these respects they must first exist, or have some necessary foundation. Beside all the small reasons we assign, there is a great reason for the existence of every extant fact—a reason which lies grand and immovable, often unsuspected, behind it in silence. The Times are the masquerade of the Eternities; trivial to the dull, tokens of noble and majestic agents to the wise; the receptacle in which the Past leaves its history; the quarry out of which the genius of to-day is building up the Future. The Times—the nations, manners, institutions, opinions, votes—are to be studied as omens, as sacred leaves, whereon a weighty sense is inscribed, if we have the wit and the love to search it out. Nature itself seems to propound to us this topic, and to invite us to explore the meaning of the conspicuous facts of the day. Everything that is popular, it has been said, deserves the attention of the philosopher: and this for the obvious reason that, although it may not be of any worth in itself, yet it characterises the people.

Here is very good matter to be handled, if we are skilful; an abundance of important practical questions which it behoves us to understand. Let us examine the pretensions of the attacking and defending parties. Here is this great fact of Conservatism, entrenched in its immense redoubts, with Himmaleh for its front, and Atlas for its flank, and Andes for its rear, and the Atlantic and Pacific seas for its ditches and trenches; which has planted its crosses, and crescents, and stars and stripes, and various signs and badges of possession, over every rood of the planet, and says, "I will hold fast; and to whom I will, will I give; and whom I will, will I exclude and starve": so says Conservatism; and all the children of men attack the colossus in their youth, and all, or all but a few, bow before it when they are old. A necessity not yet commanded, a negative imposed on the will of man by his condition, a deficiency in his force, is the foundation on which it rests. Let this side be fairly stated. Meantime, on the other part, arises Reform, and offers the sentiment of Love as an overmatch to this material might. I wish to consider well this affirmative side, which has a loftier port and reason than heretofore, which encroaches on the other every day, puts it out of countenance, out of reason, and out of temper, and leaves it nothing but silence and possession.

The fact of aristocracy, with its two weapons of wealth and manners, is as commanding a feature of the nineteenth century and the American Republic as of old Rome or modern England. The reason and influence of wealth, the aspect of philosophy and religion, and the tendencies which have acquired the name of Transcendentalism in Old and New England; the aspect of poetry, as the exponent and interpretation of these things; the fuller development and the freer play of Character as a social and political agent—these and other related topics will in turn come to be considered.

But the subject of the Times is not an abstract question. We talk of the world, but we mean a few men and women. If you speak of the age, you mean your own platoon of people, as Dante and Milton painted in colossal their platoons, and called them Heaven and Hell. In

our idea of progress we do not go out of this personal picture. We do not think the sky will be bluer, or honey sweeter, or our climate more temperate, but only that our relation to our fellows will be simpler and happier. What is the reason to be given for this extreme attraction which *persons* have for us, but that they are the Age? they are the results of the Past; they are the heralds of the Future. They indicate—these witty, suffering, blushing, intimidating figures of the only race in which there are individuals or changes—how far on the Fate has gone and what it drives at. As trees make scenery, and constitute the hospitality of the landscape, so persons are the world to persons. A cunning mystery by which the Great Desert of thoughts and of planets takes this engaging form, to bring, as it would seem, its meanings nearer to the mind. Thoughts walk and speak, and look with eyes at me, and transport me into new and magnificent scenes. These are the pungent instructors who thrill the heart of each of us, and make all other teaching formal and cold. How I follow them with aching heart, with pining desire! I count myself nothing before them. I would die for them with joy. They can do what they will with me. How they lash us with those tongues! How they make the tears start, make us blush and turn pale, and lap us in Elysium to soothing dreams and castles in the air! By tones of triumph, of dear love, by threats, by pride that freezes, these have the skill to make the world look bleak and inhospitable, or seem the nest of tenderness and joy. I do not wonder at the miracles which poetry attributes to the music of Orpheus, when I remember what I have experienced from the varied notes of the human voice. They are an incalculable energy which countervails all other forces in nature, because they are the channel of supernatural powers. There is no interest or institution so poor and withered but, if a new strong man could be born into it, he would immediately redeem and replace it. A personal ascendency—that is the only fact much worth considering. I remember, some years ago, somebody shocked a circle of friends of order here in Boston, who supposed that our people were identified with their religious denominations, by declaring that an eloquent man—let him be of what sect soever—would be ordained at once in one of our metropolitan churches. To be sure he would; and not only in ours, but in any church, mosque, or temple, on the planet; but he must be eloquent, able to supplant our method and classification by the superior beauty of his own. Every fact we have was brought here by some person; and there is none that will not change and pass away before a person whose nature is broader than the person which the fact in question represents. And so I find the Age walking about in happy and hopeful natures, in strong eyes and pleasant thoughts, and think I read it nearer and truer so, than in the statute-book, or in the investments of capital, which rather celebrate with mournful music the obsequies of the last age. In the brain of a fanatic; in the wild hope of a mountain boy, called by city boys very ignorant, because they do not know what his hope has certainly apprised him shall be; in the love-glance of a girl; in the hair-splitting conscientiousness of some eccentric person who has found some new scruple to embarrass himself and his neighbours withal, is to be found that which shall constitute the times to come, more than in the now organised and accredited oracles. For whatever is affirmative and now advancing contains it. I think that only is real which men love and rejoice in; not what they tolerate, but what they choose; what they embrace and avow, and not the things which chill, benumb, and terrify them.

And so why not draw for these times a portrait gallery? Let us paint the painters. While the Daguerreotypist, with camera-obscura and silver plate, begins now to traverse the land, let us set up our Camera also, and let the sun paint the people. Let us paint the

agitator, and the man of the old school, and the member of Congress, and the college-professor, the formidable editor, the priest and reformer, the contemplative girl, and the fair aspirant for fashion and opportunities, the woman of the world who has tried and knows—let us examine how well she knows. Could we indicate the indicators—indicate those who most accurately represent every good and evil tendency of the general mind, in the just order which they take on this canvas of Time, so that all witnesses should recognise a spiritual law as each well-known form flitted for a moment across the wall—we should have a series of sketches which would report to the next ages the colour and quality of ours.

Certainly I think, if this were done, there would be much to admire as well as to condemn; souls of as lofty a port as any in Greek or Roman fame might appear; men of great heart, of strong hand, and of persuasive speech; subtle thinkers, and men of wide sympathy, and an apprehension which looks over all history and everywhere recognises its own. To be sure, there will be fragments and hints of men, more than enough: bloated promises, which end in nothing or little. And then truly great men, but with some defect in their composition which neutralises their whole force. Here is a Damascus blade, such as you may search through nature in vain to parallel, laid up on the shelf in some village to rust and ruin. And how many seem not quite available for that idea which they represent? Now and then comes a bolder spirit, I should rather say a more surrendered soul, more informed and led by God, which is much in advance of the rest, quite beyond their sympathy, but predicts what shall soon be the general fulness; as when we stand by the seashore, while the tide is coming in, a wave comes up the beach far higher than any foregoing one, and recedes; and for a long while none comes up to that mark; but after some time the whole sea is there and beyond it.

But we are not permitted to stand as spectators of the pageant which the times exhibit; we are parties also, and have a responsibility which is not to be declined. A little while this interval of wonder and comparison is permitted us, but to the end that we shall play a manly part. As the solar system moves forward in the heavens, certain stars open before us, and certain stars close up behind us; so is man's life. The reputations that were great and inaccessible change and tarnish. How great were once Lord Bacon's dimensions! he is now reduced almost to the middle height; and many another star has turned out to be a planet or an asteroid: only a few are the fixed stars which have no parallax, or none for us. The change and decline of old reputations are the gracious marks of our own growth. Slowly, like light of morning, it steals on us, the new fact, that we who were pupils or aspirants are now society: do compose a portion of that head and heart we are wont to think worthy of all reverence and heed. We are the representatives of religion and intellect, and stand in the light of Ideas, whose rays stream through us to those younger and more in the dark. What further relations we sustain, what new lodges we are entering, is now unknown. To-day is a king in disguise. To-day always looks mean to the thoughtless, in the face of an uniform experience that all good and great and happy actions are made up precisely of these blank to-days. Let us not be so deceived. Let us unmask the king as he passes. Let us not inhabit times of wonderful and various promise without divining their tendency. Let us not see the foundations of nations and of a new and better order of things laid, with roving eyes, and an attention preoccupied with trifles.

The two omnipresent parties of History, the party of the Past and the party of the Future, divide society to-day as of old. Here is the innumerable multitude of those who accept the State and the Church from the last generation, and stand on no argument but possession.

They have reason also, and, as I think, better reason than is commonly stated. No Burke, no Metternich, has yet done full justice to the side of conservatism. But this class, however large, relying not on the intellect but on the instinct, blends itself with the brute forces of nature, is respectable only as nature is; but the individuals have no attraction for us. It is the dissenter, the theorist, the aspirant, who is quitting this ancient domain to embark on seas of adventure, who engages our interest. Omitting, then, for the present all notice of the stationary class, we shall find that the movement party divides itself into two classes, the actors and the students.

The actors constitute that great army of martyrs who, at least in America, by their conscience and philanthropy, occupy the ground which Calvinism occupied in the last age, and compose the visible Church of the existing generation. The present age will be marked by its harvest of projects for the reform of domestic, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical institutions. The leaders of the crusades against War, Negro slavery, Intemperance, Government based on force, Usages of trade, Court and Custom-house Oaths, and so on to the agitators on the system of Education and the laws of Property, are the right successors of Luther, Knox, Robinson, Fox, Penn, Wesley, and Whitfield. They have the same virtues and vices, the same noble impulse, and the same bigotry. These movements are on all accounts important; they not only check the special abuses, but they educate the conscience and the intellect of the people. How can such a question as the Slave-trade be agitated for forty years by all the Christian nations without throwing great light on ethics into the general mind? The fury with which the slave-trader defends every inch of his bloody deck and his howling auction-platform is a trumpet to alarm the ear of mankind, to wake the dull, and drive all neutrals to take sides and to listen to the argument and the verdict. The Temperance question, which rides the conversation of ten thousand circles, and is tacitly recalled at every public and at every private table, drawing with it all the curious ethics of the Pledge, of the Wine question, of the equity of the manufacture and the trade, is a gymnastic training to the casuistry and conscience of the time. Anti-masonry had a deep right and wrong, which gradually emerged to sight out of the turbid controversy. The political questions touching the Banks; the Tariff; the limits of the executive power; the right of the constituent to instruct the representative; the treatment of the Indians; the Boundary wars; the Congress of nations; are all pregnant with ethical conclusions; and it is well if government and our social order can extricate themselves from these alembics and find themselves still government and social order. The student of history will hereafter compute the singular value of our endless discussion of questions to the mind of the period.

While each of these aspirations and attempts of the people for the Better is magnified by the natural exaggeration of its advocates, until it excludes the others from sight and repels discreet persons by the unfairness of the plea, the movements are in reality all parts of one movement. There is a perfect chain—see it, or see it not—of reforms emerging from the surrounding darkness, each cherishing some part of the general idea, and all must be seen in order to do justice to any one. Seen in this their natural connection, they are sublime. The conscience of the Age demonstrates itself in this effort to raise the life of man by putting it in harmony with his idea of the Beautiful and the Just. The history of reform is always identical; it is the comparison of the idea with the fact. Our modes of living are not agreeable to our imagination. We suspect they are unworthy. We arraign our daily employments. They appear to us unfit, unworthy of the faculties we spend on them. In conversation with a wise man, we find

ourselves apologising for our employments; we speak of them with shame. Nature, literature, science, childhood, appear to us beautiful; but not our own daily work, not the ripe fruit and considered labours of man. This beauty which the fancy finds in everything else certainly accuses the manner of life we lead. Why should it be hateful? Why should it contrast thus with all natural beauty? Why should it not be poetic, and invite and raise us? Is there a necessity that the works of man should be sordid? Perhaps not. Out of this fair Idea in the mind springs the effort, at the Perfect. It is the interior testimony to a fairer possibility of life and manners which agitates society every day with the offer of some new amendment. If we would make more strict inquiry concerning its origin, we find ourselves rapidly approaching the inner boundaries of thought, that term where speech becomes silence and silence conscience. For the origin of all reform is in that mysterious fountain of the moral sentiment in man, which, amid the natural, ever contains the supernatural for men. That is new and creative. That is alive. That alone can make a man other than he is. Here or nowhere resides unbounded energy, unbounded power.

The new voices in the wilderness crying "Repent" have revived a hope, which had well-nigh perished out of the world, that the thoughts of the mind may yet, in some distant age, in some happy hour, be executed by the hands. That is the hope, of which all other hopes are parts. For some ages, these ideas have been consigned to the poet and musical composer, to the prayers and the sermons of Churches; but the thought that they can ever have any footing in real life seems long since to have been exploded by all judicious persons. Milton, in his best tract, describes a relation between religion and the daily occupations, which is true until this time.

"A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasure and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled, and of so many piddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do? Fain he would have the name to be religious; fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he, therefore, but resolve to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs; some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody; and indeed makes the very person of that man his religion; esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety. So that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual moveable, and goes and comes near him, according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him; his religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped and sumptuously laid to sleep; rises, is saluted, and after the malmsey, or some well-spiced bruage, and better breakfasted than he whose morning appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, trading all day without his religion."

This picture would serve for our times. Religion was not invited to eat or drink or sleep with us, or to make or divide an estate, but was a holiday guest. Such omissions judge the Church; as the compromise made with the slaveholder, not much noticed at first, every day appears more flagrant mischief to the American constitution. But now the purists are looking into all these matters. The more intelligent are growing uneasy on the subject of Marriage. They wish to see the character represented also in that covenant. There shall be nothing brutal in it, but it shall honour the man and the woman, as much as the most diffusive and universal action. Grimly the same

spirit looks into the law of Property, and accuses men of driving a trade in the great boundless providence which had given the air, the water, and the land to men, to use and not to fence in and monopolise. It casts its eye on Trade, and Day Labour, and so it goes up and down, paving the earth with eyes, destroying privacy and making thorough-lights. Is all this for nothing? Do you suppose that the reforms which are preparing will be as superficial as those we know?

By the books it reads and translates, judge what books it will presently print. A great deal of the profoundest thinking of antiquity, which had become as good as obsolete for us, is now re-appearing in extracts and allusions, and in twenty years will get all printed anew. See how daring is the reading, the speculation, the experimenting of the time. If, now, some genius shall arise who could unite these scattered rays! And always such a genius does embody the ideas of each time. Here is great variety and richness of mysticism, each part of which now only disgusts, while it forms the sole thought of some poor Perfectionist or "Comer out," yet when it shall be taken up as the garniture of some profound and all-reconciling thinker, will appear the rich and appropriate decoration of his robes.

These reforms are our contemporaries; they are ourselves; our own light, and sight, and conscience; they only name the relation which subsists between us and the vicious institutions which they go to rectify. They are the simplest statements of man in these matters, the plain right and wrong. I cannot choose but allow and honour them. The impulse is good, and the theory; the practice is less beautiful. The Reformers affirm the inward life, but they do not trust it, but use outward and vulgar means. They do not rely on precisely that strength which wins me to their cause; not on love, not on a principle, but on men, on multitudes, on circumstances, on money, on party; that is, on fear, on wrath, and pride. The love which lifted men to the sight of these better ends was the true and best distinction of this time, the disposition to trust a principle more than a material force. I think *that* the soul of reform; the conviction that not sensualism, not slavery, not war, not imprisonment, not even government, are needed—but in lieu of them all, reliance on the sentiment of man, which will work best the more it is trusted; not reliance on numbers, but, contrariwise, distrust of numbers and the feeling that then are we strongest when most private and alone. The young men who have been vexing society for these last years with regenerative methods seem to have made this mistake; they all exaggerated some special means, and all failed to see that the Reform of Reforms must be accomplished without means.

The Reforms have their high origin in an ideal justice, but they do not retain the purity of an idea. They are quickly organised in some low, inadequate form, and present no more poetic image to the mind than the evil tradition which they reprobated. They mix the fire of the moral sentiment with personal and party heats, with measureless exaggerations, and the blindness that prefers some darling measure to justice and truth. Those who are urging with most ardour what are called the greatest benefits of mankind are narrow, self-pleasing, conceited men, and affect us as the insane do. They bite us, and we run mad also. I think the work of the reformer as innocent as other work that is done around him; but when I have seen it near, I do not like it better. It is done in the same way, it is done profanely, not piously; by management, by tactics, and clamour. It is a buzz in the ear. I cannot feel any pleasure in sacrifices which display to me such partiality of character. We do not want actions, but men; not a chemical drop of water, but rain; the spirit that sheds and showers actions, countless, endless actions. You have on some occasion played a bold part. You have set your heart and face against society when you thought it wrong, and returned it frown for frown. Excellent;

now can you afford to forget it, reckoning all your action no more than the passing of your hand through the air, or a little breath of your mouth? The world leaves no track in space, and the greatest action of man no mark in the vast idea. To the youth diffident of his ability and full of compunction at his unprofitable existence, the temptation is always great to lend himself to public movements, and as one of a party accomplish what he cannot hope to effect alone. But he must resist the degradation of a man to a measure. I must act with truth, though I should never come to act, as you call it, with effect. I must consent to inaction. A patience which is grand; a brave and cold neglect of the offices which prudence exacts, so it be done in a deep upper piety; a consent to solitude and inaction which proceeds out of an unwillingness to violate character, is the century which makes the gem. While, therefore, I desire to express the respect and joy I feel before this sublime connection of reforms now in their infancy around us, I urge the more earnestly the paramount duties of self-reliance. I cannot find language of sufficient energy to convey my sense of the sacredness of private integrity. All men, all things, the State, the Church, yea the friends of the heart, are phantasms and unreal beside the sanctuary of the heart. With so much awe, with so much fear, let it be respected.

The great majority of men, unable to judge of any principle until its light falls on a fact, are not aware of the evil that is around them until they see it in some gross form, as in a class of intemperate men, or slaveholders, or soldiers, or fraudulent persons. Then they are greatly moved; and, magnifying the importance of that wrong, they fancy that, if that abuse were redressed, all would go well, and they fill the land with clamour to correct it. Hence the missionary and other religious efforts. If every island and every house had a Bible, if every child was brought into the Sunday-school, would the wounds of the world heal, and man be upright?

But the man of ideas, accounting the circumstance nothing, judges of the commonwealth from the state of his own mind. "If," he says, "I am selfish, then is there slavery, let the laws say what they will. For if I treat all men as gods, how to me can there be any such thing as a slave?" But how frivolous is your war against circumstances. This denouncing philanthropist is himself a slaveholder in every word and look. Does he free me? Does he cheer me? He is the State of Georgia, or Alabama, with their sanguinary slave-laws, walking here on our north-eastern shores. We are all thankful he has no more political power, as we are fond of liberty ourselves. I am afraid our virtue is a little geographical. I am not mortified by our vice; that is obduracy; it colours and palters, it curses and swears, and I can see to the end of it; but I own our virtue makes me ashamed; so sour and narrow, so thin and blind, virtue so vice-like. Then, again, how trivial seem the contests of the abolitionist, while he aims merely at the circumstance of the slave. Give the slave the least elevation of religious sentiment, and he is no slave; you are the slave; he not only in his humility feels his superiority, feels that much deplored condition of his to be a fading trifle, but he makes you feel it too. He is the master. The exaggeration which our young people make of his wrongs characterises themselves. What are no trifles to them they naturally think are no trifles to Pompey.

We say, then, that the reforming movement is sacred in its origin; in its management and details, timid and profane. These benefactors hope to raise man by improving his circumstances: by combination of that which is dead they hope to make something alive. In vain. By new infusions alone of the spirit by which he is made and directed can he be re-made and reinforced. The sad Pestalozzi, who shared with all ardent spirits the hope of

Europe on the outbreak of the French Revolution, after witnessing its sequel, recorded his conviction that "the amelioration of outward circumstances will be the effect, but can never be the means, of mental and moral improvement." Quitting, now, the class of actors, let us turn to see how it stands with the other class of which we spoke—namely, the students.

A new disease has fallen on the life of man. Every Age, like every human body, has its own distemper. Other times have had war, or famine, or a barbarism, domestic or bordering, as their antagonism. Our forefathers walked in the world and went to their graves tormented with the fear of Sin and the terror of the Day of Judgment. These terrors have lost their force, and our torment is Unbelief, the Uncertainty as to what we ought to do; the distrust of the value of what we do, and the distrust that the Necessity (which we all at last believe in) is fair and beneficent. Our Religion assumes the negative form of rejection. Out of love of the true, we repudiate the false; and the Religion is an abolishing criticism. A great perplexity hangs like a cloud on the brow of all cultivated persons, a certain imbecility in the best spirits, which distinguishes the period. We do not find the same trait in the Arabian, in the Hebrew, in Greek, Roman, Norman, English periods; no, but in other men a natural firmness. The men did not see beyond the need of the hour. They planted their foot strong, and doubted nothing. We mistrust every step we take. We find it the worst thing about time that we know not what to do with it. We are so sharp-sighted that we can neither work nor think, neither read Plato nor not read him.

Then there is what is called a too intellectual tendency. Can there be too much intellect? We have never met with any such excess. But the criticism which is levelled at the laws and manners ends in thought, without causing a new method of life. The genius of the day does not incline to a deed, but to a beholding. It is not that men do not wish to act; they pine to be employed, but are paralysed by the uncertainty what they should do. The inadequacy of the work to the faculties is the painful perception which keeps them still. This happens to the best. Then, talents bring their usual temptations, and the current literature and poetry with perverse ingenuity draw us away from life to solitude and meditation. This could well be borne if it were great and involuntary; if the men were ravished by their thought, and hurried into ascetic extravagances. Society could then manage to release their shoulder from its wheel and grant them for a time this privilege of sabbath. But they are not so. Thinking, which was a rage, is become an art. The thinker gives me results, and never invites me to be present with him at his invocation of truth, and to enjoy with him its proceeding into his mind.

So little action amid such audacious and yet sincere profession, that we begin to doubt if that great revolution in the art of war, which has made it a game of posts instead of a game of battles, has not operated on Reform: whether this be not also a war of posts, a paper blockade, in which each party is to display the utmost resources of his spirit and belief, and no conflict occur, but the world shall take that course which the demonstration of the truth shall indicate.

But we must pay for being too intellectual, as they call it. People are not as light-hearted for it. I think men never loved life less. I question if care and doubt ever wrote their name so legibly on the faces of any population. This *Ennui*, for which we Saxons had no name—this word of France has got a terrific significance. It shortens life and bereaves the day of its light. Old age begins in the nursery, and before the young American is put into jacket and trousers he says, "I want something which I never saw before"; and "I wish I was not I." I have seen the same gloom on the brow even of those

adventurers from the intellectual class who had dived deepest and with most success into active life. I have seen the authentic sign of anxiety and perplexity on the greatest forehead of the State. The canker worms have crawled to the topmost bough of the wild elm, and swing down from that. Is there less oxygen in the atmosphere? What has checked in this age the animal spirits which gave to our forefathers their bounding pulse?

But have a little patience with this melancholy humour. Their unbelief arises out of a greater Belief; their inaction out of a scorn of inadequate action. By the side of these men, the hot agitators have a certain cheap and ridiculous air; they even look smaller than the others. Of the two, I own I like the speculators best. They have some piety which looks with faith to a fair Future, unprofaned by rash and unequal attempts to realise it. And truly we shall find much to console us when we consider the cause of their uneasiness. It is the love of greatness, it is the need of harmony, the contrast of the dwarfish Actual with the exorbitant Idea. No man can compare the ideas and aspirations of the innovators of the present day with those of former periods without feeling how great and high this criticism is. The revolutions that impend over society are not now from ambition and rapacity, from impatience of one or another form of government, but from new modes of thinking, which shall recompose society after a new order, which shall animate labour by love and science, which shall destroy the value of many kinds of property and replace all property within the dominion of reason and equity. There was never so great a thought labouring in the breasts of men as now. It almost seems as if what was aforetime spoken fabulously and hieroglyphically was now spoken plainly—the doctrine, namely, of the indwelling of the Creator in man. The spiritualist wishes this only, that the spiritual principle should be suffered to demonstrate itself to the end, in all possible applications to the state of man, without the admission of anything unspiritual; that is, anything positive, dogmatic, or personal. The excellence of this class consists in this, that they have believed; that, affirming the need of new and higher modes of living and action, they have abstained from the recommendation of low methods. Their fault is that they have stopped at the intellectual perception; that their will is not yet inspired from the Fountain of Love. But whose fault is this? and what a fault, and to what inquiry does it lead! We have come to that which is the spring of all power, of beauty and virtue, of art and poetry; and who shall tell us according to what law its inspirations and its informations are given or withholden?

I do not wish to be guilty of the narrowness and pedantry of inferring the tendency and genius of the Age from a few and insufficient facts or persons. Every age has a thousand sides and signs and tendencies, and it is only when surveyed from inferior points of view that great varieties of character appear. Our time, too, is full of activity and performance. Is there not something comprehensive in the grasp of a society which to great mechanical invention and the best institutions of property adds the most daring theories, which explores the subtlest and most universal problems? At the manifest risk of repeating what every other Age has thought of itself, we might say we think the Genius of this Age more philosophical than any other has been, righter in its aims, truer, with less fear, less fable, less mixture of any sort.

But turn it how we will, as we ponder this meaning of the times, every new thought drives us to the deep fact that the Time is the child of the Eternity. The main interest which any aspects of the Times can have for us is the great spirit which gazes through them, the light which they can shed on the wonderful questions, What we are? and Whither we tend? We do not wish to be deceived. Here we drift, like white sail

across the wild ocean, now bright on the wave, now darkling in the trough of the sea—but from what port did we sail? Who knows? Or to what port are we bound? Who knows? There is no one to tell us but such poor weather-tossed mariners as ourselves, whom we speak as we pass, or who have hoisted some signal, or floated to us some letter in a bottle from far. But what know they more than we? They also found themselves on this wondrous sea. No; from the older sailors, nothing. Over all their speaking-trumpets the gray sea and the loud winds answer, Not in us; not in Time. Where, then, but in Ourselves—where but in that Thought through which we communicate with absolute nature, and are made aware that while we shed the dust of which we are built, grain by grain, till it is all gone, the law which clothes us with humanity remains anew? where but in the intuitions which are vouchsafed us from within shall we learn the Truth? Faithless, faithless, we fancy that with the dust we depart and are not, and do not know that the law and the perception of the law are at last one; that only as much as the law enters us, becomes us, we are living men—immortal with the immortality of this law. Underneath all these appearances lies that which is, that which lives, that which causes. This ever-renewing generation of appearances rests on a reality, and a reality that is alive.

To a true scholar the attraction of the aspects of nature, the departments of life, and the passages of his experience, is simply the information they yield him of this supreme nature which lurks within all. That reality, that causing force, is moral. The Moral Sentiment is but its other name. It makes by its presence or absence right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, genius or depravation. As the granite comes to the surface and towers into the highest mountains, and, if we dig down, we find it below the superficial strata, so in all the details of our domestic or civil life is hidden the elemental reality, which ever and anon comes to the surface, and forms the grand men, who are the leaders and examples, rather than the companions, of the race. The granite is curiously concealed under a thousand formations and surfaces, under fertile soils, and grasses, and flowers, under well-manured, arable fields, and large towns and cities, but it makes the foundation of these, and is always indicating its presence by slight but sure signs. So is it with the Life of our life; so close does that also hide. I read it in glad and in weeping eyes; I read it in the pride and in the humility of people; it is recognised in every bargain and in every complaisance, in every criticism, and in all praise; it is voted for at elections; it wins the cause with juries; it rides the stormy eloquence of the senate, sole victor; histories are written of it, holidays decreed to it; statues, tombs, churches built to its honour; yet men seem to fear and to shun it when it comes barely to view in our immediate neighbourhood.

For that reality let us stand; that let us serve, and for that speak. Only as far as *that* shines through them are these times or any times worth consideration. I wish to speak of the politics, education, business, and religion around us without ceremony or false deference. You will absolve me from the charge of flippancy, or malignity, or the desire to say smart things at the expense of whomsoever, when you see that reality is all we prize, and that we are bound on our entrance into nature to speak for that. Let it not be recorded in our own memories that in this moment of the Eternity, when we who were named by our names flitted across the light, we were afraid of any fact, or disgraced the fair Day by a pusillanimous preference of our bread to our freedom. What is the scholar, what is the man *for*, but for hospitality to every new thought of his time? Have you leisure, power, property, friends? You shall be the asylum and patron of every new thought, every unproven opinion, every untried project which proceeds out of good will and honest seeking. All

the newspapers, all the tongues of to-day, will, of course, at first defame what is noble; but you who hold not of to-day, not of the times, but of the Everlasting, are to stand for it; and the highest compliment man ever receives from heaven is the sending to him its disguised and discredited angels.

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# AN ADDRESS[1]

In this refulgent summer it has been a luxury to draw the breath of life. The grass grows, the buds burst, the meadow is spotted with fire and gold in the tint of flowers. The air is full of birds and sweet with the breath of the pine, the balm-of-Gilead, and the new hay. Night brings no gloom to the heart with its welcome shade. Through the transparent darkness the stars pour their almost spiritual rays. Man under them seems a young child, and his huge globe a toy. The cool night bathes the world as with a river, and prepares his eyes again for the crimson dawn. The mystery of nature was never displayed more happily. The corn and the wine have been freely dealt to all creatures, and the never-broken silence with which the old bounty goes forward has not yielded yet one word of explanation. One is constrained to respect the perfection of this world in which our senses converse. How wide; how rich; what invitation from every property it gives to every faculty of man! In its fruitful soils; in its navigable sea; in its mountains of metal and stone; in its forests of all woods; in its animals; in its chemical ingredients; in the powers and path of light, heat, attraction, and life, it is well worth the pith and heart of great men to subdue and enjoy it. The planters, the mechanics, the inventors, the astronomers, the builders of cities, and the captains, history delights to honour.

But when the mind opens and reveals the laws which traverse the universe and make things what they are, then shrinks the great world at once into a mere illustration and fable of this mind. What am I? and What is? asks the human spirit with a curiosity new-kindled, but never to be quenched. Behold these outrunning laws, which our imperfect apprehension can see tend this way and that, but not come full circle. Behold these infinite relations, so like, so unlike; many, yet one. I would study, I would know, I would admire forever. These works of thought have been the entertainments of the human spirit in all ages.

A more secret, sweet, and overpowering beauty appears to man when his heart and mind open to the sentiment of virtue. Then he is instructed in what is above him. He learns that his being is without bound; that to the good, to the perfect, he is born, low as he now lies in evil and weakness. That which he venerates is still his own, though he has not realised it yet. *He ought.* He knows the sense of that grand word, though his analysis fails to render account of it. When in innocency or when by intellectual perception he attains to say: "I love the Right; Truth is beautiful within and without forevermore. Virtue, I am thine; save me; use me; thee will I

[1] Delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A., July 15th, 1838.

serve, day and night, in great, in small, that I may be not virtuous, but virtue—then is the end of the creation answered, and God is well pleased.

The sentiment of virtue is a reverence and delight in the presence of certain divine laws. It perceives that this homely game of life we play covers under what seem foolish details, principles that astonish. The child amid his baubles is learning the action of light, motion, gravity, muscular force; and in the game of human life love, fear, justice, appetite, man, and God interact. These laws refuse to be adequately stated. They will not be written out on paper or spoken by the tongue. They elude our persevering thought; yet we read them hourly in each other's faces, in each other's actions, in our own remorse. The moral traits which are all globed into every virtuous act and thought—in speech we must sever, and describe or suggest by painful enumeration of many particulars. Yet, as this sentiment is the essence of all religion, let me guide your eye to the precise objects of the sentiment, by an enumeration of some of those classes of facts in which this element is conspicuous.

The intuition of the moral sentiment is an insight of the perfection of the laws of the soul. These laws execute themselves. They are out of time, out of space, and not subject to circumstance. Thus in the soul of man there is a justice whose retributions are instant and entire. He who does a good deed is instantly ennobled. He who does a mean deed is by the action itself contracted. He who puts off impurity, thereby puts on purity. If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God, do enter into that man with justice. If a man dissemble, deceive, he deceives himself, and goes out of acquaintance with his own being. A man, in the view of absolute goodness, adores, with total humility. Every step so downward is a step upward. The man who renounces himself comes to himself.

See how this rapid intrinsic energy worketh everywhere, righting wrongs, correcting appearances, and bringing up facts to a harmony with thoughts. Its operation in life, though slow to the senses, is at last as sure as in the soul. By it a man is made the Providence to himself, dispensing good to his goodness, and evil to his sin. Character is always known. Thefts never enrich; alms never impoverish; murder will speak out of stone walls. The least admixture of a lie—for example, the taint of vanity, any attempt to make a good impression, a favourable appearance—will instantly vitiate the effect. But speak the truth, and all nature and all spirits help you with unexpected furtherance. Speak the truth, and all things alive or brute are vouchers, and the very roots of the grass underground there do seem to stir and move to bear you witness. See again the perfection of the Law as it applies itself to the affections, and becomes the law of society. As we are, so we associate. The good, by affinity, seek the good; the vile, by affinity, the vile. Thus of their own volition souls proceed into heaven, into hell.

These facts have always suggested to man the sublime creed that the world is not the product of manifold power, but of one will, of one mind; and that one mind is everywhere active, in each ray of the star, in each wavelet of the pool; and whatever opposes that will is everywhere balked and baffled, because things are made so, and not otherwise. Good is positive. Evil is merely privative, not absolute; it is like cold, which is the privation of heat. All evil is so much death or nonentity. Benevolence is absolute and real. So much benevolence as a man hath, so much life hath he. For all things proceed out of this same spirit, which is differently named love, justice, temperance, in its different applications, just as the ocean receives different names on the several shores which it washes. All things proceed out of the same spirit,

and all things conspire with it. While a man seeks good ends, he is strong by the whole strength of nature. In so far as he roves from these ends, he bereaves himself of power, or auxiliaries; his being shrinks out of all remote channels, he becomes less and less, a mote, a point, until absolute badness is absolute death.

The perception of this law of laws awakens in the mind a sentiment which we call the religious sentiment, and which makes our highest happiness. Wonderful is its power to charm and to command. It is a mountain air. It is the embalmer of the world. It is myrrh and storax, and chlorine and rosemary. It makes the sky and the hills sublime, and the silent song of the stars is it. By it is the universe made safe and habitable, not by science or power. Thought may work cold and intransitive in things, and find no end or unity; but the dawn of the sentiment of virtue on the heart gives and is the assurance that Law is sovereign over all natures; and the worlds, time, space, eternity, do seem to break out into joy.

This sentiment is divine and deifying. It is the beatitude of man. It makes him illimitable. Through it the soul first knows itself. It corrects the capital mistake of the infant man, who seeks to be great by following the great, and hopes to derive advantages *from another*—by showing the fountain of all good to be in himself, and that he, equally with every man, is an inlet into the deeps of Reason. When he says, "I ought"; when love warms him; when he chooses, warned from on high, the good and great deed; then deep melodies wander through his soul from Supreme Wisdom. Then he can worship, and be enlarged by his worship; for he can never go behind this sentiment. In the sublimest flights of the soul rectitude is never surmounted, love is never outgrown.

This sentiment lies at the foundation of society, and successively creates all forms of worship. The principle of veneration never dies out. Man fallen into superstition, into sensuality, is never quite without the visions of the moral sentiment. In like manner, all the expressions of this sentiment are sacred and permanent in proportion to their purity. The expressions of this sentiment affect us more than all other compositions. The sentences of the oldest time, which ejaculate this piety, are still fresh and fragrant. This thought dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East; not alone in Palestine, where it reached its purest expression, but in Egypt, in Persia, in India, in China. Europe has always owed to oriental genius its divine impulses. What these holy bards said all sane men found agreeable and true. And the unique impression of Jesus upon mankind, whose name is not so much written as ploughed into the history of this world, is proof of the subtle virtue of this infusion.

Meantime, while the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition—this, namely, it is an intuition. It cannot be received at second hand. Truly speaking, it is not instruction, but provocation, that I can receive from another soul. What he announces I must find true in me, or reject; and on his word, or as his second, be he who he may, I can accept nothing. On the contrary, the absence of this primary faith is the presence of degradation. As is the flood so is the ebb. Let this faith depart, and the very words it spake and the things it made became false and hurtful. Then falls the Church, the State, art, letters, life. The doctrine ot the divine nature being forgotten, a sickness infects and dwarfs the constitution. Once man was all; now he is an appendage, a nuisance. And because the indwelling Supreme Spirit cannot wholly be got rid of, the doctrine of it suffers this perversion, that the divine nature is attributed to one or two persons, and denied to all the rest, and denied with fury. The doctrine of inspiration

is lost; the base doctrine of the majority of voices usurps the place of the doctrine of the soul. Miracles, prophecy, poetry, the ideal life, the holy life, exist as ancient history merely; they are not in the belief nor in the aspiration of society, but, when suggested, seem ridiculous. Life is comic or pitiful as soon as the high ends of being fade out of sight, and man becomes near-sighted, and can only attend to what addresses the senses.

These general views, which, while they are general, none will contest, find abundant illustration in the history of religion, and especially in the history of the Christian Church. In that all of us have had our birth and nurture. The truth contained in that, you, my young friends, are now setting forth to teach. As the Cultus, or established worship of the civilised world, it has great historical interest for us. Of its blessed words, which have been the consolation of humanity, you need not that I should speak. I shall endeavour to discharge my duty to you on this occasion, by pointing out two errors in its administration, which daily appear more gross from the point of view we have just now taken.

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, he lived in it, and had his being there. Alone in all history he estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his World. He said, in this jubilee of sublime emotion, "I am divine. Through me, God acts; through me, speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think." But what a distortion did his doctrine and memory suffer in the same, in the next, and the following ages! There is no doctrine of the Reason which will bear to be taught by the Understanding. The understanding caught this high chant from the poet's lips, and said, in the next age, "This was Jehovah come down out of heaven. I will kill you if you say he was a man." The idioms of his language and the figures of his rhetoric have usurped the place of his truth; and Churches are not built on his principles, but on his tropes. Christianity became a Mythus, as the poetic teaching of Greece and of Egypt, before. He spoke of miracles; for he felt that man's life was a miracle, and all that man doth, and he knew that this daily miracle shines as the character ascends. But the word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian Churches, gives a false impression; it is Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain.

He felt respect for Moses and the prophets, but no unfit tenderness at postponing their initial revelations to the hour and the man that now is; to the eternal revelation in the heart. Thus was he a true man. Having seen that the law in us is commanding, he would not suffer it to be commanded. Boldly, with hand, and heart, and life, he declared it was God. Thus is he, as I think, the only soul in history who has appreciated the worth of man.

1. In this point of view we become sensible of the first defect of historical Christianity. Historical Christianity has fallen into the error that corrupts all attempts to communicate religion. As it appears to us, and as it has appeared for ages, it is not the doctrine of the soul, but an exaggeration of the personal, the positive, the ritual. It has dwelt, it dwells, with noxious exaggeration about the *person* of Jesus. The soul knows no persons. It invites every man to expand to the full circle of the universe, and will have no preferences but those of spontaneous love. But by this eastern monarchy of a Christianity, which indolence and fear have built, the friend of man is made the injurer of man. The manner in which his name is surrounded with expressions which were once sallies of admiration and love, but are now petrified into official titles, kills all generous sympathy and liking. All who hear me

feel that the language that describes Christ to Europe and America is not the style of friendship and enthusiasm to a good and noble heart, but is appropriated and formal—paints a demigod, as the Orientals or the Greeks would describe Osiris or Apollo. Accept the injurious impositions of our early catechetical instruction, and even honesty and self-denial were but splendid sins, if they did not wear the Christian name. One would rather be

"A pagan, suckled in a creed outworn,"

than to be defrauded of his manly right in coming into nature and finding not names and places, not land and professions, but even virtue and truth foreclosed and monopolised. You shall not be a man even. You shall not own the world; you shall not dare and live after the infinite Law that is in you, and in company with the infinite Beauty which heaven and earth reflect to you in all lovely forms; but you must subordinate your nature to Christ's nature; you must accept our interpretations, and take his portrait as the vulgar draw it.

That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine, Obey thyself. That which shows God in me fortifies me. That which shows God out of me makes me a wart and a wen. There is no longer a necessary reason for my being. Already the long shadows of untimely oblivion creep over me, and I shall decease forever.

The divine bards are the friends of my virtue, of my intellect, of my strength. They admonish me that the gleams which flash across my mind are not mine, but God's; that they had the like, and were not disobedient to the heavenly vision. So I love them. Noble provocations go out from them, inviting me to resist evil, to subdue the world, and to Be. And thus, by his holy thoughts, Jesus serves us, and thus only. To aim to convert a man by miracles is a profanation of the soul. A true conversion, a true Christ, is now, as always, to be made by the reception of beautiful sentiments. It is true that a great and rich soul, like his, falling among the simple, does so preponderate that, as his did, it names the world. The world seems to them to exist for him, and they have not yet drunk so deeply of his sense as to see that only by coming again to themselves, or to God in themselves, can they grow forevermore. It is a low benefit to give me something; it is a high benefit to enable me to do somewhat of myself. The time is coming when all men will see that the gift of God to the soul is not a vaunting, overpowering, excluding sanctity, but a sweet, natural goodness—a goodness like thine and mine, and that so invites thine and mine to be and to grow.

The injustice of the vulgar tone of preaching is not less flagrant to Jesus than to the souls which it profanes. The preachers do not see that they make his gospel not glad, and shear him of the locks of beauty and the attributes of heaven. When I see a majestic Epaminondas, or Washington; when I see among my contemporaries a true orator, an upright judge, a dear friend; when I vibrate to the melody and fancy of a poem, I see beauty that is to be desired. And so lovely, and with yet more entire consent of my human being, sounds in my ear the severe music of the bards that have sung of the true God in all ages. Now, do not degrade the life and dialogues of Christ out of the circle of this charm by insulation and peculiarity. Let them lie as they befell, alive and warm, part of human life and of the landscape and of the cheerful day.

2. The second defect of the traditionary and limited way of using the mind of Christ is a consequence of the first—this, namely, that the Moral Nature, that Law of laws whose revelations introduce greatness—yea, God himself—into the open soul, is not explored as the fountain of the established teaching in society. Men have come to speak of the revelation as somewhat long ago given and done, as if God were dead.

The injury to faith throttles the preacher; and the goodliest of institutions becomes an uncertain and inarticulate voice.

It is very certain that it is the effect of conversation with the beauty of the soul, to beget a desire and need to impart to others the same knowledge and love. If utterance is denied, the thought lies like a burden on the man. Always the seer is a sayer. Somehow his dream is told; somehow he publishes it with solemn joy; sometimes with pencil on canvas, sometimes with chisel on stone, sometimes in towers and aisles of granite, his soul's worship is builded; sometimes in anthems of indefinite music; but clearest and most permanent in words.

The man enamoured of this excellency becomes its priest or poet. The office is coeval with the world. But observe the condition, the spiritual limitation of the office. The spirit only can teach. Not any profane man, not any sensual, not any liar, not any slave can teach, but only he can give who has; he only can create who is. The man on whom the soul descends, through whom the soul speaks, alone can teach. Courage, piety, love, wisdom, can teach; and every man can open his door to these angels, and they shall bring him the gift of tongues. But the man who aims to speak as books enable, as synods use, as the fashion guides, and as interest commands, babbles. Let him hush.

To this holy office you propose to devote yourselves. I wish you may feel your call in throbs of desire and hope. The office is the first in the world. It is of that reality that it cannot suffer the deduction of any falsehood. And it is my duty to say to you that the need was never greater of new revelation than now. From the views I have already expressed, you will infer the sad conviction, which I share, I believe, with numbers, of the universal decay and now almost death of faith in society. The soul is not preached. The Church seems to totter to its fall, almost all life extinct. On this occasion any complaisance would be criminal which told you, whose hope and commission it is to preach the faith of Christ, that the faith of Christ is preached.

It is time that this ill-suppressed murmur of all thoughtful men against the famine of our Churches—this moaning of the heart because it is bereaved of the consolation, the hope, the grandeur that come alone out of the culture of the moral nature—should be heard through the sleep of indolence and over the din of routine. This great and perpetual office of the preacher is not discharged. Preaching is the expression of the moral sentiment in application to the duties of life. In how many churches, by how many prophets, tell me, is man made sensible that he is an infinite Soul; that the earth and heavens are passing into his mind; that he is drinking forever the soul of God? Where now sounds the persuasion that by its very melody imparadises my heart, and so affirms its own origin in heaven? Where shall I hear words such as in elder ages drew men to leave all and follow—father and mother, house and land, wife and child? Where shall I hear these august laws of moral being so pronounced as to fill my ear, and I feel ennobled by the offer of my uttermost action and passion? The test of the true faith, certainly, should be its power to charm and command the soul, as the laws of nature control the activity of the hands—so commanding that we find pleasure and honour in obeying. The faith should blend with the light of rising and of setting suns, with the flying cloud, the singing bird, and the breath of flowers. But now the priest's Sabbath has lost the splendour of nature; it is unlovely; we are glad when it is done; we can make, we do make, even sitting in our pews, a far better, holier, sweeter, for ourselves.

Whenever the pulpit is usurped by a formalist, then is the worshipper defrauded and disconsolate. We shrink as soon as the prayers begin, which do not uplift, but smite and offend us. We are fain to wrap our cloaks about us, and secure, as best we can, a solitude that hears not. I once heard a preacher who sorely

tempted me to say I would go to church no more. Men go, thought I, where they are wont to go, else had no soul entered the temple in the afternoon. A snow-storm was falling around us. The snow-storm was real, the preacher merely spectral, and the eye felt the sad contrast in looking at him, and then out of the window behind him into the beautiful meteor of the snow. He had lived in vain. He had no one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commended, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession—namely, to convert life into truth—he had not learned. Not one fact in all his experience had he yet imported into his doctrine. This man had ploughed and planted and talked and bought and sold; he had read books; he had eaten and drunken; his head aches, his heart throbs; he smiles and suffers; yet was there not a surmise, a hint, in all the discourse, that he had ever lived at all. Not a line did he draw out of real history. The true preacher can be known by this, that he deals out to the people his life—life passed through the fire of thought. But of the bad preacher, it could not be told from his sermon what age of the world he fell in; whether he had a father or a child; whether he was a freeholder or a pauper; whether he was a citizen or a countryman; or any other fact of his biography. It seemed strange that the people should come to church. It seemed as if their houses were very unentertaining that they should prefer this thoughtless clamour. It shows that there is a commanding attraction in the moral sentiment that can lend a faint tint of light to dulness and ignorance coming in its name and place. The good hearer is sure he has been touched sometimes; is sure there is somewhat to be reached, and some word that can reach it. When he listens to these vain words, he comforts himself by their relation to his remembrance of better hours, and so they clatter and echo unchallenged.

I am not ignorant that, when we preach unworthily, it is not always quite in vain. There is a good ear, in some men, that draws supplies to virtue out of very indifferent nutriment. There is poetic truth concealed in all the commonplaces of prayer and of sermons, and, though foolishly spoken, they may be wisely heard, for each is some select expression that broke out in a moment of piety from some stricken or jubilant soul, and its excellency made it remembered. The prayers and even the dogmas of our Church are like the zodiac of Denderah and the astronomical monuments of the Hindoos, wholly insulated from anything now extant in the life and business of the people. They mark the height to which the waters once rose. But this docility is a check upon the mischief from the good and devout. In a large portion of the community the religious service gives rise to quite other thoughts and emotions. We need not chide the negligent servant. We are struck with pity, rather, at the swift retribution of his sloth. Alas for the unhappy man that is called to stand in the pulpit, and *not* give bread of life. Everything that befalls, accuses him. Would he ask contributions for the missions, foreign or domestic? Instantly his face is suffused with shame, to propose to his parish that they should send money a hundred or a thousand miles, to furnish such poor fare as they have at home and would do well to go the hundred or the thousand miles to escape. Would he urge people to a godly way of living; and can he ask a fellow-creature to come to Sabbath meetings, when he and they all know what is the poor uttermost they can hope for therein? Will he invite them privately to the Lord's Supper? He dares not. If no heart warm this rite, the hollow, dry, creaking formality is too plain than that he can face a man of wit and energy and put the invitation without terror. In the street, what has he to say to the bold village blasphemer? The village blasphemer sees fear in the face, form, and gait of the minister.

Let me not taint the sincerity of this plea by any oversight of the claims of good men. I know and honour the purity and strict conscience of numbers of the clergy. What life the public worship retains it owes to the scattered company of pious men, who minister here and there in the churches, and who, sometimes, accepting with too great tenderness the tenet of the elders, have not accepted from others, but from their own heart, the genuine impulses of virtue, and so still command our love and awe, to the sanctity of character. Moreover, the exceptions are not so much to be found in a few eminent preachers as in the better hours, the truer inspirations of all—nay, in the sincere moments of every man. But, with whatever exception, it is still true that tradition characterises the preaching of this country; that it comes out of the memory, and not out of the soul; that it aims at what is usual, and not at what is necessary and eternal; that thus historical Christianity destroys the power of preaching, by withdrawing it from the exploration of the moral nature of man; where the sublime is, where are the resources of astonishment and power. What a cruel injustice it is to that Law, the joy of the whole earth, which alone can make thought dear and rich; that Law whose fatal sureness the astronomical orbits poorly emulate—that it is travestied and depreciated, that it is behooted and behowled, and not a trait, not a word of it, articulated. The pulpit, in losing sight of this Law, loses its reason, and gropes after it knows not what. And for want of this culture the soul of the community is sick and faithless. It wants nothing so much as a stern, high, stoical, Christian discipline to make it know itself and the divinity that speaks through it. Now man is ashamed of himself; he skulks and sneaks through the world, to be tolerated, to be pitied, and scarcely in a thousand years does any man dare to be wise and good, and so draw after him the tears and blessings of his kind.

Certainly there have been periods when, from the inactivity of the intellect on certain truths, a greater faith was possible in names and persons. The Puritans in England and America found in the Christ of the Catholic Church and in the dogmas inherited from Rome scope for their austere piety and their longings for civil freedom. But their creed is passing away, and none arises in its room. I think no man can go with his thoughts about him into one of our churches without feeling that what hold the public worship had on men is gone, or going. It has lost its grasp on the affection of the good and the fear of the bad. In the country, neighbourhoods, half parishes, are *signing-off*, to use the local term. It is already beginning to indicate character and religion to withdraw from the religious meetings. I have heard a devout person, who prized the Sabbath, say in bitterness of heart: "On Sundays it seems wicked to go to church." And the motive that holds the best there is now only a hope and a waiting. What was once a mere circumstance, that the best and the worst men in the parish, the poor and the rich, the learned and the ignorant, young and old, should meet one day as fellows in one house, in sign of an equal right in the soul, has come to be a paramount motive for going thither.

My friends, in these two errors, I think, I find the causes of a decaying Church and a wasting unbelief. And what greater calamity can fall upon a nation than the loss of worship? Then all things go to decay. Genius leaves the temple to haunt the senate or the market. Literature becomes frivolous. Science is cold. The eye of youth is not lighted by the hope of other worlds, and age is without honour. Society lives to trifles, and when men die we do not mention them.

And now, my brothers, you will ask, What in these desponding days can be done by us? The remedy is already declared in the ground of our complaint of the Church. We have contrasted the Church with the Soul. In the soul, then,

let the redemption be sought. Wherever a man comes, there comes revolution. The old is for slaves. When a man comes, all books are legible, all things transparent, all religions are forms. He is religious. Man is the wonder-worker. He is seen amid miracles. All men bless and curse. He saith yea and nay, only. The stationariness of religion; the assumption that the age of inspiration is past, that the Bible is closed; the fear of degrading the character of Jesus by representing him as a man—indicate with sufficient clearness the falsehood of our theology. It is the office of a true teacher to show us that God is, not was; that he speaketh, not spake. The true Christianity—a faith like Christ's in the infinitude of man—is lost. None believeth in the soul of man, but only in some man or person old and departed. Ah me! no man goeth alone. All men go in flocks to this saint or that poet, avoiding the God who seeth in secret. They cannot see in secret; they love to be blind in public. They think society wiser than their soul, and know not that one soul, and their soul, is wiser than the whole world. See how nations and races flit by on the sea of time and leave no ripple to tell where they floated or sunk, and one good soul shall make the name of Moses, or of Zeno, or of Zoroaster, reverend forever. None assayeth the stern ambition to be the Self of the nation and of nature, but each would be an easy secondary to some Christian scheme, or sectarian connection, or some eminent man. Once leave your own knowledge of God, your own sentiment, and take secondary knowledge, as St. Paul's, or George Fox's, or Swedenborg's, and you get wide from God with every year this secondary form lasts, and if, as now, for centuries—the chasm yawns to that breadth, that men can scarcely be convinced there is in them anything divine.

Let me admonish you, first of all, to go alone; to refuse the good models, even those which are sacred in the imagination of men, and dare to love God without mediator or veil. Friends enough you shall find who will hold up to your emulation Wesleys and Oberlins, Saints and Prophets. Thank God for these good men, but say, "I also am a man." Imitation cannot go above its model. The imitator dooms himself to hopeless mediocrity. The inventor did it because it was natural to him, and so in him it has a charm. In the imitator something else is natural, and he bereaves himself of his own beauty, to come short of another man's.

Yourself a new-born bard of the Holy Ghost, cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint men at first hand with Deity. Look to it, first and only, that fashion, custom, authority, pleasure, and money are nothing to you—are not bandages over your eyes, that you cannot see—but live with the privilege of the immeasurable mind. Not too anxious to visit periodically all families and each family in your parish connection—when you meet one of these men or women, be to them a divine man; be to them thought and virtue; let their timid aspirations find in you a friend; let their trampled instincts be genially tempted out in your atmosphere; let their doubts know that you have doubted, and their wonder feel that you have wondered. By trusting your own heart, you shall gain more confidence in other men. For all our penny-wisdom, for all our soul-destroying slavery to habit, it is not to be doubted that all men have sublime thoughts; that all men value the few real hours of life; they love to be heard; they love to be caught up into the vision of principles. We mark with light in the memory the few interviews we have had, in the dreary years of routine and of sin, with souls that made our souls wiser; that spoke what we thought; that told us what we knew; that gave us leave to be what we inly were. Discharge to men the priestly office, and, present or absent, you shall be followed with their love as by an angel.

And, to this end, let us not aim at common degrees of merit. Can we not

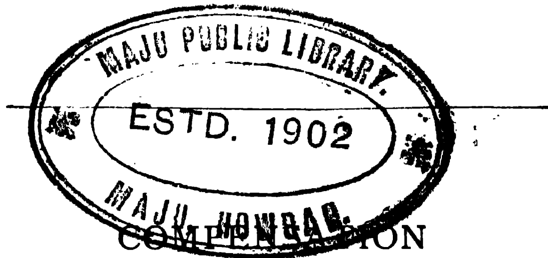
leave, to such as love it, the virtue that glitters for the commendation of society, and ourselves pierce the deep solitudes of absolute ability and worth? We easily come up to the standard of goodness in society. Society's praise can be cheaply secured, and almost all men are content with those easy merits; but the instant effect of conversing with God will be to put them away. There are persons who are not actors, not speakers, but influences; persons too great for fame, for display; who disdain eloquence; to whom all we call art and artist seems too nearly allied to show and by-ends, to the exaggeration of the finite and selfish, and loss of the universal. The orators, the poets, the commanders, encroach on us only as fair women do, by our allowance and homage. Slight them by preoccupation of mind—slight them, as you can well afford to do, by high and universal aims, and they instantly feel that you have right, and that it is in lower places that they must shine. They also feel your right; for they with you are open to the influx of the all-knowing Spirit, which annihilates before its broad noon the little shades and gradations of intelligence in the compositions we call wiser and wisest.

In such high communion let us study the grand strokes of rectitude: a bold benevolence, an independence of friends, so that not the unjust wishes of those who love us shall impair our freedom, but we shall resist for truth's sake the freest flow of kindness, and appeal to sympathies far in advance; and—what is the highest form in which we know this beautiful element—a certain solidity of merit, that has nothing to do with opinion, and which is so essentially and manifestly virtue that it is taken for granted that the right, the brave, the generous step will be taken by it, and nobody thinks of commending it. You would compliment a coxcomb doing a good act, but you would not praise an angel. The silence that accepts merit as the most natural thing in the world is the highest applause. Such souls, when they appear, are the Imperial Guard of Virtue, the perpetual reserve, the dictators of fortune. One needs not praise their courage—they are the heart and soul of nature. O my friends, there are resources in us on which we have not drawn. There are men who rise refreshed on hearing a threat; men to whom a crisis which intimidates and paralyses the majority—demanding not the faculties of prudence and thrift, but comprehension, immovableness, the readiness of sacrifice—comes graceful and beloved as a bride. Napoleon said of Massena that he was not himself until the battle began to go against him; then, when the dead began to fall in ranks around him, awoke his powers of combination, and he put on terror and victory as a robe. So it is in rugged crises, in unweariable endurance, and in aims which put sympathy out of question, that the angel is shown. But these are heights that we can scarce remember and look up to without contrition and shame. Let us thank God that such things exist.

And now let us do what we can to rekindle the smouldering, nigh quenched, fire on the altar. The evils of the Church that now is are manifest. The question returns, What shall we do? I confess, all attempts to project and establish a Cultus with new rites and forms seem to me vain. Faith makes us, and not we it, and faith makes its own forms. All attempts to contrive a system are as cold as the new worship introduced by the French to the goddess of Reason—to-day pasteboard and filigree, and ending to-morrow in madness and murder. Rather let the breath of new life be breathed by you through the forms already existing. For if once you are alive, you shall find they shall become plastic and new. The remedy to their deformity is first, soul, and second, soul, and evermore, soul. A whole popedom of forms one pulsation of virtue can uplift and vivify. Two inestimable advantages Christianity has given us: first the Sabbath, the jubilee of the whole world, whose light dawns welcome alike into

the closet of the philosopher, into the garret of toil, and into prison-cells, and everywhere suggests, even to the vile, the dignity of spiritual being. Let it stand forevermore, a temple, which new love, new faith, new sight, shall restore to more than its first splendour to mankind. And secondly, the institution of preaching—the speech of man to men—essentially the most flexible of all organs, of all forms. What hinders that now, everywhere, in pulpits, in lecture-rooms, in houses, in fields, wherever the invitation of men or your own occasions lead you, you speak the very truth, as your life and conscience teach it, and cheer the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and new revelation?

I look for the hour when that supreme Beauty which ravished the souls of those eastern men, and chiefly of those Hebrews, and through their lips spoke oracles to all time, shall speak in the West also. The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures contain immortal sentences, that have been bread of life to millions. But they have no epical integrity; are fragmentary; are not shown in their order to the intellect. I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle; shall see their rounding complete grace; shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy.




## COMPENSATION

Ever since I was a boy I have wished to write a discourse on Compensation; for it seemed to me, when very young, that on this subject life was ahead of theology, and the people knew more than the preachers taught. The documents, too, from which the doctrine is to be drawn charmed my fancy by their endless variety, and lay always before me, even in sleep; for they are the tools in our hands, the bread in our basket, the transactions of the street, the farm, and the dwelling-house; greetings, relations, debts and credits, the influence of character, the nature and endowment of all men. It seemed to me also that in it might be shown men a ray of divinity, the present action of the soul of this world, clean from all vestige of tradition; and so the heart of man might be bathed by an inundation of eternal love, conversing with that which he knows was always and always must be, because it really is now. It appeared, moreover, that if this doctrine could be stated in terms with any resemblance to those bright intuitions in which this truth is sometimes revealed to us, it would be a star in many dark hours and crooked passages in our journey, that would not suffer us to lose our way.

I was lately confirmed in these desires by hearing a sermon at church. The preacher, a man esteemed for his orthodoxy, unfolded in the ordinary manner the doctrine of the Last Judgment. He assumed that judgment is not executed in this world; that the wicked are successful; that the good are miserable; and then urged from reason and from Scripture a compensation to be made to both parties in the next life. No offence appeared to be taken by the congregation at this doctrine. As far as I could

observe when the meeting broke up, they separated without remark on the sermon.

Yet what was the import of this teaching? What did the preacher mean by saying that the good are miserable in the present life? Was it that houses and lands, offices, wine, horses, dress, luxury, are had by unprincipled men, while the saints are poor and despised; and that a compensation is to be made to these last hereafter, by giving them the like gratifications another day—bank-stock and doubloons, venison and champagne? This must be the compensation intended; for what else? Is it that they are to have leave to pray and praise? to love and serve me? Why, that they can do now. The legitimate inference the disciple would draw was—"We are to have *such* a good time as the sinners have now"; or, to push it to its extreme import—"You sin now; we shall sin by and by; we would sin now, if we could; not being successful, we expect our revenge to-morrow."

The fallacy lay in the immense concession that the bad are successful; that justice is not done now. The blindness of the preacher consisted in deferring to the base estimate of the market of what constitutes a manly success, instead of confronting and convicting the world from the truth; announcing the presence of the soul; the omnipotence of the will; and so establishing the standard of good and ill, of success and falsehood.

I find a similar base tone in the popular religious works of the day, and the same doctrines assumed by the literary men when occasionally they treat the related topics. I think that our popular theology has gained in decorum, and not in principle, over the superstitions it has displaced. But men are better than their theology. Their daily life gives it the lie. Every ingenuous and aspiring soul leaves the doctrine behind him in his own experience, and all men feel sometimes the falsehood which they cannot demonstrate. For men are wiser than they know. That which they hear in schools and pulpits without afterthought, if said in conversation would probably be questioned in silence. If a man dogmatise in a mixed company on Providence and the divine laws, he is answered by a silence which conveys well enough to an observer the dissatisfaction of the hearer, but his incapacity to make his own statement.

I shall attempt in this chapter to record some facts that indicate the path of the law of Compensation; happy beyond my expectaiton if I shall truly draw the smallest arc of this circle.

Polarity, or action and reaction, we meet in every part of nature; in darkness and light; in heat and cold; in the ebb and flow of waters; in male and female; in the inspiration and expiration of plants and animals; in the equation of quantity and quality in the fluids of the animal body; in the systole and diastole of the heart; in the undulations of fluids and of sound; in the centrifugal and centripetal gravity; in electricity, galvanism, and chemical affinity. Superinduce magnetism at one end of a needle, the opposite magnetism takes place at the other end. If the south attracts, the north repels. To empty here, you must condense there. An inevitable dualism bisects nature, so that each thing is a half, and suggests another thing to make it whole; as spirit, matter; man, woman; odd, even; subjective, objective; in, out; upper, under; motion, rest; yea, nay.

While the world is thus dual, so is every one of its parts. The entire system of things gets represented in every particle. There is somewhat that resembles the ebb and flow of the sea, day and night, man and woman, in a single needle of the pine, in a kernel of corn, in each individual of every animal tribe. The reaction, so grand in the elements, is repeated within these small boundaries. For example, in the animal kingdom the physiologist has observed that no creatures are favourites, but a certain compensation balances every gift and every defect. A surplusage given to one part

is paid out of a reduction from another part of the same creature. If the head and neck are enlarged, the trunk and extremities are cut short.

The theory of the mechanic forces is another example. What we gain in power is lost in time, and the converse. The periodic or compensating errors of the planets are another instance. The influences of climate and soil in political history are another. The cold climate invigorates. The barren soil does not breed fevers, crocodiles, tigers, or scorpions.

The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man. Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet hath its sour; every evil its good. Every faculty which is a receiver of pleasure has an equal penalty put on its abuse. It is to answer for its moderation with its life. For every grain of wit there is a grain of folly. For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something. If riches increase, they are increased that use them. If the gatherer gathers too much, Nature takes out of the man what she puts into his chest; swells the estate, but kills the owner. Nature hates monopolies and exceptions. The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing than the varieties of condition tend to equalise themselves. There is always some levelling circumstance that puts down the overbearing, the strong, the rich, the fortunate, substantially on the same ground with all others. Is a man too strong and fierce for society and by temper and position a bad citizen—a morose ruffian, with a dash of the pirate in him? Nature sends him a troop of pretty sons and daughters who are getting along in the dame's classes at the village school, and love and fear for them smooths his grim scowl to courtesy. Thus she contrives to itinerate the granite and felspar, takes the boar out and puts the lamb in, and keeps her balance true.

The farmer imagines power and place are fine things. But the President has paid dear for his White House. It has commonly cost him all his peace and the best of his manly attributes. To preserve for a short time so conspicuous an appearance before the world, he is content to eat dust before the real masters who stand erect behind the throne. Or do men desire the more substantial and permanent grandeur of genius? Neither has this an immunity. He who by force of will or of thought is great and overlooks thousands has the charges of that eminence. With every influx of light comes new danger. Has he light? he must bear witness to the light, and always outrun that sympathy which gives him such keen satisfaction, by his fidelity to new revelations of the incessant soul. He must hate father and mother, wife and child. Has he all that the world loves and admires and covets? he must cast behind him their admiration and afflict them by faithfulness to his truth and become a byword and a hissing.

This law writes the laws of cities and nations. It is in vain to build or plot or combine against it. Things refuse to be mismanaged long. *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Though no checks to a new evil appear, the checks exist, and will appear. If the government is cruel, the governor's life is not safe. If you tax too high, the revenue will yield nothing. If you make the criminal code sanguinary, juries will not convict. If the law is too mild, private vengeance comes in. If the government is a terrific democracy, the pressure is resisted by an over-charge of energy in the citizen, and life glows with a fiercer flame. The true life and satisfactions of man seem to elude the utmost rigours or felicities of condition, and to establish themselves with great indifferency under all varieties of circumstances. Under all governments the influence of character remains the same—in Turkey and in New England about alike. Under the primeval despots of Egypt history honestly confesses that man must have been as free as culture could make him.

These appearances indicate the fact that the universe is represented in every one of its particles. Everything in nature contains all the powers of nature. Everything is made of one hidden stuff; as the naturalist sees one type under every metamorphosis, and regards a horse as a running man, a fish as a swimming man, a bird as a flying man, a tree as a rooted man. Each new form repeats not only the main character of the type, but part for part all the details, all the aims, furtherances, hindrances, energies, and whole system of every other. Every occupation, trade, art, transaction, is a compend of the world and a correlative of every other. Each one is an entire emblem of human life; of its good and ill, its trials, its enemies, its course, and its end. And each one must somehow accommodate the whole man and recite all his destiny.

The world globes itself in a drop of dew. The microscope cannot find the animalcule which is less perfect for being little. Eyes, ears, taste, smell, motion, resistance, appetite, and organs of reproduction that take hold on eternity—all find room to consist in the small creature. So do we put our life into every act. The true doctrine of omnipresence is that God reappears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb. The value of the universe contrives to throw itself into every point. If the good is there, so is the evil; if the affinity, so the repulsion; if the force, so the limitation.

Thus is the universe alive. All things are moral. That soul which within us is a sentiment, outside of us is a law. We feel its inspiration; out there in history we can see its fatal strength. "It is in the world, and the world was made by it." Justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life. *Οἱ κύβοι Διὸς ἀεὶ εὐπίπτουσι*—The dice of God are always loaded. The world looks like a multiplication table, or a mathematical equation, which, turn it how you will, balances itself. Take what figure you will, its exact value, nor more nor less, still returns to you. Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears wherever a part appears. If you see smoke, there must be fire. If you see a hand or a limb, you know that the trunk to which it belongs is there behind.

Every act rewards itself, or in other words integrates itself, in a twofold manner: first in the thing, or in real nature; and secondly in the circumstance, or in apparent nature. Men call the circumstance the retribution. The causal retribution is in the thing, and is seen by the soul. The retribution in the circumstance is seen by the understanding; it is inseparable from the thing, but is often spread over a long time, and so does not become distinct until after many years. The specific stripes may follow late after the offence, but they follow because they accompany it. Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a fruit that, unsuspected, ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end preëxists in the means, the fruit in the seed.

While thus the world will be whole and refuses to be disparted, we seek to act partially, to sunder, to appropriate; for example, to gratify the senses we sever the pleasure of the senses from the needs of the character. The ingenuity of man has always been dedicated to the solution of one problem—how to detach the sensual sweet, the sensual strong, the sensual bright, etc., from the moral sweet, the moral deep, the moral fair; that is, again, to contrive to cut clean off this upper surface so thin as to leave it bottomless; to get a *one end*, without an *other end*. The soul says, "Eat"; the body would feast. The soul says, "The man and woman shall be one flesh and one soul"; the body would join the flesh only. The soul says, "Have dominion

over all things to the ends of virtue"; the body would have the power over things to its own ends.

The soul strives amain to live and work through all things. It would be the only fact. All things shall be added unto it—power, pleasure, knowledge, beauty. The particular man aims to be somebody; to set up for himself; to truck and higgle for a private good; and, in particulars, to ride that he may ride; to dress that he may be dressed; to eat that he may eat; and to govern that he may be seen. Men seek to be great; they would have offices, wealth, power, and fame. They think that to be great is to possess one side of nature—the sweet, without the other side, the bitter.

This dividing and detaching is steadily counteracted. Up to this day it must be owned no projector has had the smallest success. The parted water reunites behind our hand. Pleasure is taken out of pleasant things, profit out of profitable things, power out of strong things, as soon as we seek to separate them from the whole. We can no more halve things and get the sensual good, by itself, than we can get an inside that shall have no outside, or a light without a shadow. "Drive out Nature with a fork, she comes running back."

Life invests itself with inevitable conditions, which the unwise seek to dodge, which one and another brags that he does not know, that they do not touch him; but the brag is on his lips, the conditions are in his soul. If he escapes them in one part, they attack him in another more vital part. If he has escaped them in form and in the appearance, it is because he has resisted his life and fled from himself, and the retribution is so much death. So signal is the failure of all attempts to make this separation of the good from the tax, that the experiment would not be tried—since to try it is to be mad—but for the circumstance that when the disease began in the will, of rebellion and separation, the intellect is at once infected, so that the man ceases to see God whole in each object, but is able to see the sensual allurement of an object and not see the sensual hurt; he sees the mermaid's head, but not the dragon's tail, and thinks he can cut off that which he would have from that which he would not have. "How secret art thou who dwellest in the highest heavens in silence, O thou only great God, sprinkling with an unwearied providence certain penal blindnesses upon such as have unbridled desires!"[1]

The human soul is true to these facts in the painting of fable, of history, of law, of proverbs, of conversation. It finds a tongue in literature unawares. Thus the Greeks called Jupiter, Supreme Mind; but, having traditionally ascribed to him many base actions, they involuntarily made amends to reason by tying up the hands of so bad a god. He is made as helpless as a king of England. Prometheus knows one secret which Jove must bargain for; Minerva, another. He cannot get his own thunders; Minerva keeps the key of them:—

> "Of all the gods, I only know the keys
> That ope the solid doors within whose vaults
> His thunders sleep."

A plain confession of the in-working of the All and of its moral aim. The Indian mythology ends in the same ethics; and it would seem impossible for any fable to be invented and get any currency which was not moral. Aurora forgot to ask youth for her lover, and, though Tithonus is immortal, he is old. Achilles is not quite invulnerable; the sacred waters did not wash the heel by which Thetis held him. Siegfried, in the Nibelungen, is not quite immortal, for a leaf fell on his back while he was bathing in the dragon's blood, and that spot which it covered is mortal. And so it must be. There is a crack in everything God has made. It would seem there is always this vindictive circumstance stealing in at unawares even into the wild poesy in which the human fancy attempted to make bold holiday and to

[1] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, B. I.

shake itself free of the old laws—this back-stroke, this kick of the gun, certifying that the law is fatal; that in nature nothing can be given, all things are sold.

This is that ancient doctrine of Nemesis, who keeps watch in the universe and lets no offence go unchastised. The Furies they said are attendants on justice, and, if the sun in heaven should transgress his path, they would punish him. The poets related that stone walls and iron swords and leathern thongs had an occult sympathy with the wrongs of their owners; that the belt which Ajax gave Hector dragged the Trojan hero over the field at the wheels of the car of Achilles, and the sword which Hector gave Ajax was that on whose point Ajax fell. They recorded that when the Thasians erected a statue to Theagenes, a victor in the games, one of his rivals went to it by night and endeavoured to throw it down by repeated blows, until at last he moved it from its pedestal and was crushed to death beneath its fall.

This voice of fable has in it somewhat divine. It came from thought above the will of the writer. That is the best part of each writer which has nothing private in it; that which he does not know; that which flowed out of his constitution and not from his too active invention; that which in the study of a single artist you might not easily find, but in the study of many you would abstract as the spirit of them all. Phidias it is not, but the work of man in that early Hellenic world that I would know. The name and circumstance of Phidias, however convenient for history, embarrass when we come to the highest criticism. We are to see that which man was tending to do in a given period, and was hindered, or, if you will, modified in doing, by the interfering volitions of Phidias, of Dante, of Shakespeare, the organ whereby man at the moment wrought.

Still more striking is the expression of this fact in the proverbs of all nations, which are always the literature of reason, or the statements of an absolute truth without qualification. Proverbs, like the sacred books of each nation, are the sanctuary of the institutions. That which the droning world, chained to appearances, will not allow the realist to say in his own words, it will suffer him to say in proverbs without contradiction. And this law of laws, which the pulpit, the senate, and the college deny, is hourly preached in all markets and workshops by flights of proverbs, whose teaching is as true and as omnipresent as that of birds and flies.

All things are double, one against another.—Tit for tat; an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; measure for measure; love for love.—Give, and it shall be given you.—He that watereth shall be watered himself.—What will you have? quoth God; pay for it and take it.—Nothing venture, nothing have.—Thou shalt be paid exactly for what thou hast done, no more, no less.—Who doth not work shall not eat.—Harm watch, harm catch.—Curses always recoil on the head of him who imprecates them.—If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own.—Bad counsel confounds the adviser.—The Devil is an ass.

It is thus written, because it is thus in life. Our action is overmastered and characterised above our will by the law of nature. We aim at a petty end quite aside from the public good, but our act arranges itself by irresistible magnetism in a line with the poles of the world.

A man cannot speak but he judges himself. With his will or against his will he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it. It is a thread-ball thrown at a mark, but the other end remains in the thrower's bag. Or rather it is a harpoon hurled at the whale, unwinding, as it flies, a coil of cord in the boat, and if the harpoon is not good, or not well thrown, it will go nigh to cut the steersman in twain or to sink the boat.

You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong. "No man had ever a point

of pride that was not injurious to him," said Burke. The exclusive in fashionable life does not see that he excludes himself from enjoyment, in the attempt to appropriate it. The exclusionist in religion does not see that he shuts the door of heaven on himself, in striving to shut out others. Treat men as pawns and nine-pins, and you shall suffer as well as they. If you leave our their heart, you shall lose your own. The senses would make things of all persons; of women, of children, of the poor. The vulgar proverb, "I will get it from his purse or get it from his skin," is sound philosophy.

All infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by fear. While I stand in simple relations to my fellow-man, I have no displeasure in meeting him. We meet as water meets water, or as two currents of air mix, with perfect diffusion and interpenetration of nature. But as soon as there is any departure from simplicity and attempt at halfness, or good for me that is not good for him, my neighbour feels the wrong; he shrinks from me as far as I have shrunk from him; his eyes no longer seek mine; there is war between us; there is hate in him and fear in me.

All the old abuses in society, universal and particular, all unjust accumulations of property and power, are avenged in the same manner. Fear is an instructor of great sagacity and the herald of all revolutions. One thing he teaches, that there is rottenness where he appears. He is a carrion crow, and, though you see not well what he hovers for, there is death somewhere. Our property is timid, our laws are timid, our cultivated classes are timid. Fear for ages has boded and mowed and gibbered over government and property. The obscene bird is not there for nothing. He indicates great wrongs which must be revised.

Of the like nature is that expectation of change which instantly follows the suspension of our voluntary activity. The terror of cloudless noon, the emerald of Polycrates, the awe of prosperity, the instinct which leads every generous soul to impose on itself tasks of a noble asceticism and vicarious virtue, are the tremblings of the balance of justice through the heart and mind of man.

Experienced men of the world know very well that it is best to pay scot and lot as they go along, and that a man often pays dear for a small frugality. The borrower runs in his own debt. Has a man gained anything who has received a hundred favours and rendered none? Has he gained by borrowing, through indolence or cunning, his neighbour's wares, or horses, or money? There arises on the deed the instant acknowledgment of benefit on the one part and of debt on the other; that is, of superiority and inferiority. The transaction remains in the memory of himself and his neighbour; and every new transaction alters according to its nature their relation to each other. He may soon come to see that he had better have broken his own bones than to have ridden in his neighbour's coach, and that "the highest price he can pay for a thing is to ask for it."

A wise man will extend this lesson to all parts of life, and know that it is the part of prudence to face every claimant and pay every just demand on your time, your talents, or your heart. Always pay; for first or last you must pay your entire debt. Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must pay at last your own debt. If you are wise, you will dread a prosperity which only loads you with more. Benefit is the end of nature. But for every benefit which you receive a tax is levied. He is great who confers the most benefits. He is base—and that is the one base thing in the universe—to receive favours and render none. In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody. Beware of too much good staying in your

hand. It will fast corrupt and worm worms. Pay it away quickly in some sort.

Labour is watched over by the same pitiless laws. Cheapest, say the prudent, is the dearest labour. What we buy in a broom, a mat, a waggon, a knife, is some application of good sense to a common want. It is best to pay in your land a skilful gardener, or to buy good sense applied to gardening; in your sailor, good sense applied to navigation; in the house, good sense applied to cooking, sewing, serving; in your agent, good sense applied to accounts and affairs. So do you multiply your presence, or spread yourself throughout your estate. But because of the dual constitution of things, in labour as in life there can be no cheating. The thief steals from himself. The swindler swindles himself. For the real price of labour is knowledge and virtue, whereof wealth and credit are signs. These signs, like paper money, may be counterfeited or stolen, but that which they represent—namely, knowledge and virtue—cannot be counterfeited or stolen. These ends of labour cannot be answered but by real exertions of the mind, and in obedience to pure motives. The cheat, the defaulter, the gambler, cannot extort the knowledge of material and moral nature which his honest care and pains yield to the operative. The law of nature is, Do the thing, and you shall have the power; but they who do not the thing have not the power.

Human labour, through all its forms, from the sharpening of a stake to the construction of a city or an epic, is one immense illustration of the perfect compensation of the universe. The absolute balance of Give and Take, the doctrine that everything has its price—and if that price is not paid, not that thing but something else is obtained, and that it is impossible to get anything without its price—is not less sublime in the columns of a ledger than in the budgets of States, in the laws of light and darkness, in all the action and reaction of nature. I cannot doubt that the high laws which each man sees implicated in those processes with which he is conversant, the stern ethics which sparkle on his chisel-edge, which are measured out by his plumb and foot-rule, which stand as manifest in the footing of the shop-bill as in the history of a State—do recommend to him his trade, and, though seldom named, exalt his business to his imagination.

The league between virtue and nature engages all things to assume a hostile front to vice. The beautiful laws and substances of the world persecute and whip the traitor. He finds that things are arranged for truth and benefit, but there is no den in the wide world to hide a rogue. Commit a crime, and the earth is made of glass. Commit a crime, and it seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground, such as reveals in the woods the track of every partridge and fox and squirrel and mole. You cannot recall the spoken word, you cannot wipe out the foot-track, you cannot draw up the ladder, so as to leave no inlet or clue. Some damning circumstance always transpires. The laws and substances of nature—water, snow, wind, gravitation—become penalties to the thief.

On the other hand, the law holds with equal sureness for all right action. Love, and you shall be loved. All love is mathematically just, as much as the two sides of an algebraic equation. The good man has absolute good, which, like fire, turns everything to its own nature, so that you cannot do him any harm; but as the royal armies sent against Napoleon, when he approached, cast down their colours and from enemies became friends, so disasters of all kinds, as sickness, offence, poverty, prove benefactors:—

> "Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave and power and deity,
> Yet in themselves are nothing."

The good are befriended even by weakness and defect. As no man had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to him, so no man had ever a defect that was not somewhere made useful to him. The stag in the fable admired his horns

and blamed his feet; but when the hunter came his feet saved him, and afterwards, caught in the thicket, his horns destroyed him. Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults. As no man thoroughly understands a truth until he has contended against it, so no man has a thorough acquaintance with the hindrances or talents of men until he has suffered from the one and seen the triumph of the other over his own want of the same. Has he a defect of temper that unfits him to live in society? Thereby he is driven to entertain himself alone and acquire habits of self-help; and thus, like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl.

Our strength grows out of our weakness. The indignation which arms itself with secret forces does not awaken until we are pricked and stung and sorely assailed. A great man is always willing to be little. While he sits on the cushion of advantages, he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something; he has been put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the insanity of conceit; has got moderation and real skill. The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point. The wound cicatrises and falls off from him like a dead skin; and when they would triumph, lo! he has passed on invulnerable. Blame is safer than praise. I hate to be defended in a newspaper. As long as all that is said is said against me, I feel a certain assurance of success. But as soon as honeyed words of praise are spoken for me I feel as one that lies unprotected before his enemies. In general, every evil to which we do not succumb is a benefactor. As the Sandwich Islander believes that the strength and valour of the enemy he kills passes into himself, so we gain the strength of the temptation we resist.

The same guards which protect us from disaster, defect, and enmity, defend us, if we will, from selfishness and fraud. Bolts and bars are not the best of our institutions, nor is shrewdness in trade a mark of wisdom. Men suffer all their life long under the foolish superstition that they can be cheated. But it is as impossible for a man to be cheated by anyone but himself as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time. There is a third silent party to all our bargains. The nature and soul of things takes on itself the guaranty of the fulfilment of every contract, so that honest service cannot come to loss. If you serve an ungrateful master, serve him the more. Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withholden, the better for you; for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer.

The history of persecution is a history of endeavours to cheat nature, to make water run up hill, to twist a rope of sand. It makes no difference whether the actors be many or one, a tyrant or a mob. A mob is a society of bodies voluntarily bereaving themselves of reason and traversing its work. The mob is man voluntarily descending to the nature of the beast. Its fit hour of activity is night. Its actions are insane, like its whole constitution. It persecutes a principle; it would whip a right; it would tar and feather justice by inflicting fire and outrage upon the houses and persons of those who have these. It resembles the prank of boys, who run with fire-engines to put out the ruddy aurora streaming to the stars. The inviolate spirit turns their spite against the wrong-doers. The martyr cannot be dishonoured. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. Hours of sanity and consideration are always arriving to communities, as to individuals, when the truth is seen and the martyrs are justified.

Thus do all things preach the indifferency of circumstances. The man is

all. Everything has two sides, a good and an evil. Every advantage has its tax. I learn to be content. But the doctrine of compensation is not the doctrine of indifferency. The thoughtless say, on hearing these representations, What boots it to do well? there is one event to good and evil: if I gain any good, I must pay for it; if I lose any good, I gain some other: all actions are indifferent.

There is a deeper fact in the soul than compensation—to wit, its own nature. The soul is not a compensation, but a life. The soul *is*. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real Being. Essence, or God, is not a relation or a part, but the whole. Being is the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts, and times within itself. Nature, truth, virtue, are the influx from thence. Vice is the absence or departure of the same. Nothing, Falsehood, may indeed stand as the great Night or shade on which as a background the living universe paints itself forth, but no fact is begotten by it; it cannot work, for it is not. It cannot work any good; it cannot work any harm. It is harm, inasmuch as it is worse not to be than to be.

We feel defrauded of the retribution due to evil acts, because the criminal adheres to his vice and contumacy, and does not come to a crisis or judgment anywhere in visible nature. There is no stunning confutation of his nonsense before men and angels. Has he therefore outwitted the law? Inasmuch as he carries the malignity and the lie with him, he so far deceases from nature. In some manner there will be a demonstration of the wrong to the understanding also; but, should we not see it, this deadly deduction makes square the eternal account.

Neither can it be said, on the other hand, that the gain of rectitude must be bought by any loss. There is no penalty to virtue; no penalty to wisdom; they are proper additions of being. In a virtuous action I properly *am;* in a virtuous act I add to the world; I plant into deserts conquered from Chaos and Nothing, and see the darkness receding on the limits of the horizon. There can be no excess to love, none to knowledge, none to beauty, when these attributes are considered in the purest sense. The soul refuses limits, and always affirms an Optimism, never a Pessimism.

His life is a progress, and not a station. His instinct is trust. Our instinct uses "more" and "less" in application to man, of the *presence of the soul*, and not of its absence; the brave man is greater than the coward; the true, the benevolent, the wise, is more a man, and not less, than the fool and knave. There is no tax on the good of virtue, for that is the incoming of God himself, or absolute existence, without any comparative. Material good has its tax, and, if it came without desert or sweat, has no root in me, and the next wind will blow it away. But all the good of nature is the soul's, and may be had if paid for in nature's lawful coin—that is, by labour which the heart and the head allow. I no longer wish to meet a good I do not earn—for example, to find a pot of buried gold, knowing that it brings with it new burdens. I do not wish more external goods—neither possessions, nor honours, nor powers, nor persons. The gain is apparent; the tax is certain. But there is no tax on the knowledge that the compensation exists, and that it is not desirable to dig up treasure. Herein I rejoice with a serene, eternal peace. I contract the boundaries of possible mischief. I learn the wisdom of St. Bernard: "Nothing can work me damage except myself; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault."

In the nature of the soul is the compensation for the inequalities of condition. The radical tragedy of nature seems to be the distinction of More and Less. How can Less not feel the pain; how not feel indignation or malevolence

towards More? Look at those who have less faculty, and one feels sad and knows not well what to make of it. He almost shuns their eye; he fears they will upbraid God. What should they do? It seems a great injustice. But see the facts nearly, and these mountainous inequalities vanish. Love reduces them as the sun melts the icebergs in the sea. The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother, and my brother is me. If I feel overshadowed and outdone by great neighbours, I can yet love; I can still receive; and he that loveth maketh his own the grandeur he loves. Thereby I make the discovery that my brother is my guardian, acting for me with the friendliest designs, and the estate I so admired and envied is my own. It is the nature of the soul to appropriate all things. Jesus and Shakespeare are fragments of the soul, and by love I conquer and incorporate them in my own conscious domain. His virtue—is not that mine? His wit—if it cannot be made mine, it is not wit.

Such also is the natural history of calamity. The changes which break up at short intervals the prosperity of men are advertisements of a nature whose law is growth. Every soul is by this intrinsic necessity quitting its whole system of things, its friends and home and laws and faith, as the shell-fish crawls out of its beautiful but stony case, because it no longer admits of its growth, and slowly forms a new house. In proportion to the vigour of the individual these revolutions are frequent, until in some happier mind they are incessant, and all worldly relations hang very loosely about him, becoming, as it were, a transparent fluid membrane through which the living form is seen, and not, as in most men, an indurated heterogeneous fabric of many dates and of no settled character, in which the man is imprisoned. Then there can be enlargement, and the man of to-day scarcely recognises the man of yesterday. And such should be the outward biography of man in time, a putting-off of dead circumstances day by day, as he renews his raiment day by day. But to us, in our lapsed estate, resting, not advancing, resisting, not coöperating, with the divine expansion, this growth comes by shocks.

We cannot part with our friends. We cannot let our angels go. We do not see that they only go out that archangels may come in. We are idolaters of the old. We do not believe in the riches of the soul, in its proper eternity and omnipresence. We do not believe there is any force in to-day to rival or recreate that beautiful yesterday. We linger in the ruins of the old tent where once we had bread and shelter and organs, nor believe that the spirit can feed, cover, and nerve us again. We cannot again find aught so dear, so sweet, so graceful. But we sit and weep in vain. The voice of the Almighty saith, "Up and onward for evermore!" We cannot stay amid the ruins. Neither will we rely on the new; and so we walk ever with reverted eyes, like those monsters who look backwards.

And yet the compensations of calamity are made apparent to the understanding also, after long intervals of time. A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a

sunny garden-flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener is made the banian of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighbourhoods of men.

# THE OVER-SOUL

THERE is a difference between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect. Our faith comes in moments; our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences. For this reason the argument which is always forthcoming to silence those who conceive extraordinary hopes of man—namely, the appeal to experience—is for ever invalid and vain. We give up the past to the objector, and yet we hope. He must explain this hope. We grant that human life is mean, but how did we find out that it was mean? What is the ground of this uneasiness of ours; of this old discontent? What is the universal sense of want and ignorance but the fine innuendo by which the soul makes its enormous claim? Why do men feel that the natural history of man has never been written, but he is always leaving behind what you have said of him, and it becomes old, and books of metaphysics worthless? The philosophy of six thousand years has not searched the chambers and magazines of the soul. In its experiments there has always remained, in the last analysis, a residuum it could not resolve. Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. The most exact calculator has no prescience that somewhat incalculable may not baulk the very next moment. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine.

As with events, so is it with thoughts. When I watch that flowing river, which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me, I see that I am a pensioner; not a cause, but a surprised spectator of this ethereal water; that I desire and look up and put myself in the attitude of reception, but from some alien energy the visions come.

The Supreme Critic on the errors of the past and the present, and the only prophet of that which must be, is that great nature in which we rest as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere; that Unity, that Over-soul, within which every man's particular being is contained and made one with all other; that common heart of which all sincere conversation is the worship, to which all right action is submission; that overpowering reality which confutes our tricks and talents, and constrains every one to pass for what he is, and to speak from his character and not from his tongue, and which evermore tends to pass into our thought and hand and become wisdom and virtue and power and beauty. We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence; the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist, and whose beatitude is all accessible to us, is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour, but the act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one. We see

the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul. Only by the vision of that Wisdom can the horoscope of the ages be read, and by falling back on our better thoughts, by yielding to the spirit of prophecy which is innate in every man, we can know what it saith. Every man's words who speaks from that life must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own part. I dare not speak for it. My words do not carry its august sense; they fall short and cold. Only itself can inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be lyrical, and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind. Yet I desire, even by profane words, if I may not use sacred, to indicate the heaven of this deity, and to report what hints I have collected of the transcendent simplicity and energy of the Highest Law.

If we consider what happens in conversation, in reveries, in remorse, in times of passion, in surprises, in the instructions of dreams, wherein often we see ourselves in masquerade—the droll disguises only magnifying and enhancing a real element and forcing it on our distant notice—we shall catch many hints that will broaden and enlighten into knowledge of the secret of nature. All goes to show that the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the background of our being, in which they lie—an immensity not possessed, and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all. A man is the façade of a temple wherein all wisdom and all good abide. What we commonly call man, the eating, drinking, planting, counting man, does not, as we know him, represent himself, but misrepresents himself. Him we do not respect, but the soul, whose organ he is, would he let it appear through his action, would make our knees bend. When it breathes through his intellect, it is genius; when it breathes through his will, it is virtue; when it flows through his affection, it is love. And the blindness of the intellect begins when it would be something of itself. The weakness of the will begins when the individual would be something of himself. All reform aims in some one particular to let the soul have its way through us; in other words, to engage us to obey.

Of this pure nature every man is at some time sensible. Language cannot paint it with his colours. It is too subtile. It is undefinable, unmeasurable; but we know that it pervades and contains us. We know that all spiritual being is in man. A wise old proverb says: "God comes to see us without bell"—that is, as there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. Justice we see and know, Love, Freedom, Power. These natures no man ever got above, but they tower over us, and most in the moment when our interests tempt us to wound them.

The sovereignty of this nature whereof we speak is made known by its independency of those limitations which circumscribe us on every hand. The soul circumscribes all things. As I have said, it contradicts all experience. In like manner it abolishes time and space. The influence of the senses has in most men overpowered the mind to that degree that the walls of time and space have come to look real and insurmountable; and to speak with levity of these limits is, in the world, the sign of insanity. Yet time and space are but inverse measures of the force of the soul. The spirit sports with time:—

"Can crowd eternity into an hour,
Or stretch an hour to eternity."

We are often made to feel that there is another youth and age than that which is measured from the year of our natural birth. Some thoughts always find us young, and keep us so. Such a thought is the love of the universal and eternal beauty. Every man parts from that contemplation with the feeling that it rather belongs to ages than to mortal life. The least activity of the intellectual powers redeems us in a degree from the conditions of time. In sickness, in languor, give us a strain of poetry or a profound sentence, and we are refreshed; or produce a volume of Plato or Shakespeare, or remind us of their names, and instantly we come into a feeling of longevity. See how the deep divine thought reduces centuries and millenniums, and makes itself present through all ages. Is the teaching of Christ less effective now than it was when first his mouth was opened? The emphasis of facts and persons in my thought has nothing to do with time. And so always the soul's scale is one, the scale of the senses and the understanding is another. Before the revelations of the soul, Time, Space, and Nature shrink away. In common speech we refer all things to time, as we habitually refer the immensely sundered stars to one concave sphere. And so we say that the Judgment is distant or near, that the Millennium approaches, that a day of certain political, moral, social reforms is at hand, and the like, when we mean that in the nature of things one of the facts we contemplate is external and fugitive, and the other is permanent and connate with the soul. The things we now esteem fixed shall, one by one, detach themselves like ripe fruit from our experience, and fall. The wind shall blow them none knows whither. The landscape, the figures, Boston, London, are facts as fugitive as any institution past, or any whiff of mist or smoke, and so is society, and so is the world. The soul looketh steadily forwards, creating a world before her, leaving worlds behind her. She has no dates, nor rites, nor persons, nor specialities, nor men. The soul knows only the soul; the web of events is the flowing robe in which she is clothed.

After its own law, and not by arithmetic, is the rate of its progress to be computed. The soul's advances are not made by gradation, such as can be represented by motion in a straight line, but rather by ascension of state, such as can be represented by metamorphosis—from the egg to the worm, from the worm to the fly. The growths of genius are of a certain *total* character, that does not advance the elect individual first over John, then Adam, then Richard, and give to each the pain of discovered inferiority; but by every throe of growth the man expands there where he works, passing, at each pulsation, classes, populations, of men. With each divine impulse the mind rends the thin rinds of the visible and finite, and comes out into eternity, and inspires and expires its air. It converses with truths that have always been spoken in the world, and becomes conscious of a closer sympathy with Zeno and Arrian than with persons in the house.

This is the law of moral and of mental gain. The simple rise as by specific levity not into a particular virtue, but into the region of all the virtues. They are in the spirit which contains them all. The soul requires purity, but purity is not it; requires justice, but justice is not that; requires beneficence, but is somewhat better; so that there is a kind of descent and accommodation felt when we leave speaking of moral nature to urge a virtue which it enjoins. To the well-born child all the virtues are natural, and not painfully acquired. Speak to his heart, and the man becomes suddenly virtuous.

Within the same sentiment is the germ of intellectual growth, which obeys the same law. Those who are capable of humility, of justice, of love, of aspiration, stand already on a platform that commands the sciences and arts, speech

and poetry, action and grace. For whoso dwells in this moral beatitude already anticipates those special powers which men prize so highly. The lover has no talent, no skill, which passes for quite nothing with his enamoured maiden, however little she may possess of related faculty; and the heart which abandons itself to the Supreme Mind finds itself related to all its works, and will travel a royal road to particular knowledges and powers. In ascending to this primary and aboriginal sentiment we have come from our remote station on the circumference instantaneously to the centre of the world, where, as in the closet of God, we see causes, and anticipate the universe, which is but a slow effect.

One mode of the divine teaching is the incarnation of the spirit in a form—in forms, like my own. I live in society; with persons who answer to thoughts in my own mind, or express a certain obedience to the great instincts to which I live. I see its presence to them. I am certified of a common nature; and these other souls, these separated selves, draw me as nothing else can. They stir in me the new emotions we call passion; of love, hatred, fear, admiration, pity; thence come conversation, competition, persuasion, cities, and war. Persons are supplementary to the primary teaching of the soul. In youth we are mad for persons. Childhood and youth see all the world in them. But the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all. Persons themselves acquaint us with the impersonal. In all conversation between two persons tacit reference is made, as to a third party, to a common nature. That third party or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; is God. And so in groups where debate is earnest, and especially on high questions, the company become aware that the thought rises to an equal level in all bosoms, that all have a spiritual property in what was said, as well as the sayer. They all become wiser than they were. It arches over them like a temple, this unity of thought in which every heart beats with nobler sense of power and duty, and thinks and acts with unusual solemnity. All are conscious of attaining to a higher self-possession. It shines for all. There is a certain wisdom of humanity which is common to the greatest men with the lowest, and which our ordinary education often labours to silence and obstruct. The mind is one, and the best minds, who love truth for its own sake, think much less of property in truth. They accept it thankfully everywhere, and do not label or stamp it with any man's name, for it is theirs long beforehand, and from eternity. The learned and the studious of thought have no monopoly of wisdom. Their violence of direction in some degree disqualifies them to think truly. We owe many valuable observations to people who are not very acute or profound, and who say the thing without effort which we want and have long been hunting in vain. The action of the soul is oftener in that which is felt and left unsaid than in that which is said in any conversation. It broods over every society, and they unconsciously seek for it in each other. We know better than we do. We do not yet possess ourselves, and we know at the same time that we are much more. I feel the same truth how often in my trivial conversation with my neighbours, that somewhat higher in each of us overlooks this by-play, and Jove nods to Jove from behind each of us.

Men descend to meet. In their habitual and mean service to the world, for which they forsake their native nobleness, they resemble those Arabian sheiks who dwell in mean houses and affect an external poverty, to escape the rapacity of the Pacha, and reserve all their display of wealth for their interior and guarded retirements.

As it is present in all persons, so it is in every period of life. It is adult already in the infant man. In my dealing with my child, my Latin and Greek, my accomplishments and my money, stead me nothing; but as much soul as I have

avails. If I am wilful, he sets his will against mine, one for one, and leaves me, if I please, the degradation of beating him by my superiority of strength. But if I renounce my will and act for the soul, setting that up as umpire between us two, out of his young eyes looks the same soul; he reveres and loves with me.

The soul is the perceiver and revealer of truth. We know truth when we see it, let sceptic and scoffer say what they choose. Foolish people ask you, when you have spoken what they do not wish to hear, "How do you know it is truth, and not an error of your own?" We know truth when we see it, from opinion, as we know when we are awake that we are awake. It was a grand sentence of Emanuel Swedenborg, which would alone indicate the greatness of that man's perception: "It is no proof of a man's understanding to be able to affirm whatever he pleases; but to be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false—this is the mark and character of intelligence." In the book I read, the good thought returns to me, as every truth will, the image of the whole soul. To the bad thought which I find in it, the same soul becomes a discerning, separating sword, and lops it away. We are wiser than we know. If we will not interfere with our thought, but will act entirely, or see how the thing stands in God, we know the particular thing, and every thing, and every man. For the Maker of all things and all persons stands behind us and casts his dread omniscience through us over things.

But beyond this recognition of its own in particular passages of the individual's experience, it also reveals truth. And here we should seek to reinforce ourselves by its very presence, and to speak with a worthier, loftier strain of that advent. For the soul's communication of truth is the highest event in nature, since it then does not give somewhat from itself, but it gives itself, or passes into and becomes that man whom it enlightens; or, in proportion to that truth he receives, it takes him to itself.

We distinguish the announcements of the soul, its manifestations of its own nature, by the term *Revelation*. These are always attended by the emotion of the sublime. For this communication is an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life. Every distinct apprehension of this central commandment agitates men with awe and delight. A thrill passes through all men at the reception of new truth, or at the performance of a great action, which comes out of the heart of nature. In these communications the power to see is not separated from the will to do, but the insight proceeds from obedience, and the obedience proceeds from a joyful perception. Every moment when the individual feels himself invaded by it is memorable. By the necessity of our constitution a certain enthusiasm attends the individual's consciousness of that divine presence. The character and duration of this enthusiasm vary with the state of the individual, from an ecstasy and trance and prophetic inspiration—which is its rarer appearance—to the faintest glow of virtuous emotion, in which form it warms, like our household fires, all the families and associations of men, and makes society possible. A certain tendency to insanity has always attended the opening of the religious sense in men, as if they had been "blasted with excess of light." The trances of Socrates, the "union" of Plotinus, the vision of Porphyry, the conversion of Paul, the aurora of Behmen, the convulsions of George Fox and his Quakers, the illumination of Swedenborg, are of this kind. What was in the case of these remarkable persons a ravishment has, in innumerable instances in common life, been exhibited in less striking manner. Everywhere the history of religion betrays a tendency to enthusiasm. The rapture of the Moravian and Quietist; the opening of the eternal sense of the Word, in the language of the New Jerusalem Church; the *revival* of the Calvinistic Churches; the

*experiences* of the Methodists, are varying forms of that shudder of awe and delight with which the individual soul always mingles with the universal soul.

The nature of these revelations is the same; they are perceptions of the absolute law. They are solutions of the soul's own questions. They do not answer the questions which the understanding asks. The soul answers never by words, but by the thing itself that is inquired after.

Revelation is the disclosure of the soul. The popular notion of a revelation is that it is a telling of fortunes. In past oracles of the soul the understanding seeks to find answers to sensual questions, and undertakes to tell from God how long men shall exist, what their hands shall do and who shall be their company, adding names and dates and places. But we must pick no locks. We must check this low curiosity. An answer in words is delusive; it is really no answer to the questions you ask. Do not require a description of the countries towards which you sail. The description does not describe them to you, and to-morrow you arrive there and know them by inhabiting them. Men ask concerning the immortality of the soul, the employments of heaven, the state of the sinner, and so forth. They even dream that Jesus has left replies to precisely these interrogatories. Never a moment did that sublime spirit speak in their *patois*. To truth, justice, love, the attributes of the soul, the idea of immutableness is essentially associated. Jesus, living in these moral sentiments, heedless of sensual fortunes, heeding only the manifestations of these, never made the separation of the idea of duration from the essence of these attributes, nor uttered a syllable concerning the duration of the soul. It was left to his disciples to sever duration from the moral elements, and to teach the immortality of the soul as a doctrine, and maintain it by evidences. The moment the doctrine of the immortality is separately taught, man is already fallen. In the flowing of love, in the adoration of humility, there is no question of continuance. No inspired man ever asks this question or condescends to these evidences. For the soul is true to itself, and the man in whom it is shed abroad cannot wander from the present, which is infinite, to a future which would be finite.

These questions which we lust to ask about the future are a confession of sin. God has no answer for them. No answer in words can reply to a question of things. It is not in an arbitrary "decree of God," but in the nature of man, that a veil shuts down on the facts of to-morrow; for the soul will not have us read any other cipher than that of cause and effect. By this veil which curtains events it instructs the children of men to live in to-day. The only mode of obtaining an answer to these questions of the senses is to forego all low curiosity, and, accepting the tide of being which floats us into the secret of nature, work and live, work and live, and all unawares the advancing soul has built and forged for itself a new condition, and the question and the answer are one.

By the same fire, vital, consecrating, celestial, which burns until it shall dissolve all things into the waves and surges of an ocean of light, we see and know each other, and what spirit each is of. Who can tell the grounds of his knowledge of the character of the several individuals in his circle of friends? No man. Yet their acts and words do not disappoint him. In that man, though he knew no ill of him, he put no trust. In that other, though they had seldom met, authentic signs had yet passed, to signify that he might be trusted as one who had an interest in his own character. We know each other very well—which of us has been just to himself, and whether that which we teach or behold is only an aspiration or is our honest effort also.

We are all discerners of spirits. That diagnosis lies aloft in our life or unconscious power. The intercourse of society, its trade, its religion, its friendships, its

quarrels, is one wide judicial investigation of character. In full court, or in small committee, or confronted face to face, accuser and accused, men offer themselves to be judged. Against their will they exhibit those decisive trifles by which character is read. But who judges? and what? Not our understanding. We do not read them by learning or craft. No; the wisdom of the wise man consists herein, that he does not judge them; he lets them judge themselves, and merely reads and records their own verdict.

By virtue of this inevitable nature, private will is overpowered, and, maugre our efforts or our imperfections, your genius will speak from you, and mine from me. That which we are we shall teach, not voluntarily, but involuntarily. Thoughts come into our minds by avenues which we never left open, and thoughts go out of our minds through avenues which we never voluntarily opened. Character teaches over our head. The infallible index of true progress is found in the tone the man takes. Neither his age, nor his breeding, nor company, nor books, nor actions, nor talents, nor all together, can hinder him from being deferential to a higher spirit than his own. If he have not found his home in God, his manners, his forms of speech, the turn of his sentences, the build, shall I say, of all his opinions, will involuntarily confess it, let him brave it out how he will. If he have found his centre, the Deity will shine through him, through all the disguises of ignorance, of ungenial temperament, of unfavourable circumstance. The tone of seeking is one, and the tone of having is another.

The great distinction between teachers sacred or literary—between poets like Herbert and poets like Pope—between philosophers like Spinoza, Kant, and Coleridge, and philosophers like Locke, Paley, Mackintosh, and Stewart—between men of the world who are reckoned accomplished talkers, and here and there a fervent mystic, prophesying half insane under the infinitude of his thought—is that one class speak *from within*, or from experience, as parties and possessors of the fact; and the other class *from without*, as spectators merely, or perhaps as acquainted with the fact on the evidence of third persons. It is of no use to preach to me from without. I can do that too easily myself. Jesus speaks always from within, and in a degree that transcends all others. In that is the miracle. I believe beforehand that it ought so to be. All men stand continually in the expectation of the appearance of such a teacher. But if a man do not speak from within the veil, where the word is one with that it tells of, let him lowly confess it.

The same Omniscience flows into the intellect, and makes what we call genius. Much of the wisdom of the world is not wisdom, and the most illuminated class of men are no doubt superior to literary fame, and are not writers. Among the multitude of scholars and authors we feel no hallowing presence; we are sensible of a knack and skill rather than of inspiration; they have a light, and know not whence it comes, and call it their own; their talent is some exaggerated faculty, some overgrown member, so that their strength is a disease. In these instances the intellectual gifts do not make the impression of virtue, but almost of vice; and we feel that a man's talents stand in the way of his advancement in truth. But genius is religious. It is a larger imbibing of the common heart. It is not anomalous, but more like and not less like other men. There is in all great poets a wisdom of humanity which is superior to any talents they exercise. The author, the wit, the partisan, the fine gentleman, does not take place of the man. Humanity shines in Homer, in Chaucer, in Spenser, in Shakespeare, in Milton. They are content with truth. They use the positive degree. They seem frigid and phlegmatic to those who have been spiced with the frantic passion and violent colouring of inferior but popular writers. For they are poets by the free course which they allow to the informing soul, which

through their eyes beholds again and blesses the things which it hath made. The soul is superior to its knowledge, wiser than any of its works. The great poet makes us feel our own wealth, and then we think less of his compositions. His best communication to our mind is to teach us to despise all he has done. Shakespeare carries us to such a lofty strain of intelligent activity as to suggest a wealth which beggars his own; and we then feel that the splendid works which he has created, and which in other hours we extol as a sort of self-existent poetry, take no stronger hold of real nature than the shadow of a passing traveller on the rock. The inspiration which uttered itself in Hamlet and Lear could utter things as good from day to day for ever. Why, then, should I make account of Hamlet and Lear as if we had not the soul from which they fell as syllables from the tongue?

This energy does not descend into individual life on any other condition than entire possession. It comes to the lowly and simple; it comes to whomsoever will put off what is foreign and proud; it comes as insight; it comes as serenity and grandeur. When we see those whom it inhabits, we are apprised of new degrees of greatness. From that inspiration the man comes back with a changed tone. He does not talk with men with an eye to their opinion. He tries them. It requires of us to be plain and true. The vain traveller attempts to embellish his life by quoting my lord and the prince and the countess, who thus said or did to *him*. The ambitious vulgar show you their spoons and brooches and rings, and preserve their cards and compliments. The more cultivated, in their account of their own experience, cull out the pleasing, poetic circumstance—the visit to Rome, the man of genius they saw, the brilliant friend they know; still further on, perhaps, the gorgeous landscape, the mountain lights, the mountain thoughts they enjoyed yesterday—and so seek to throw a romantic colour over their life. But the soul that ascends to worship the great God is plain and true; has no rose colour, no fine friends, no chivalry, no adventures; does not want admiration; dwells in the hour that now is, in the earnest experience of the common day—by reason of the present moment and the mere trifle having become porous to thought and bibulous of the sea of light.

Converse with a mind that is grandly simple, and literature looks like word-catching. The simplest utterances are worthiest to be written, yet are they so cheap, and so things of course, that in the infinite riches of the soul it is like gathering a few pebbles off the ground, or bottling a little air in a phial, when the whole earth and the whole atmosphere are ours. Nothing can pass there, or make you one of the circle, but the casting aside your trappings and dealing man to man in naked truth, plain confession, and omniscient affirmation.

Souls such as these treat you as gods would, walk as gods in the earth, accepting without any admiration your wit, your bounty, your virtue even—say rather your act of duty, for your virtue they own as their proper blood, royal as themselves, and over-royal, and the father of the gods. But what rebuke their plain fraternal bearing casts on the mutual flattery with which authors solace each other and wound themselves! These flatter not. I do not wonder that these men go to see Cromwell and Christina and Charles the Second and James the First and the Grand Turk. For they are, in their own elevation, the fellows of kings, and must feel the servile tone of conversation in the world. They must always be a godsend to princes, for they confront them, a king to a king, without ducking or concession, and give a high nature the refreshment and satisfaction of resistance, of plain humanity, of even companionship, and of new ideas. They leave them wiser and superior men. Souls like these make us feel that sincerity is more excellent than flattery. Deal so plainly with man and woman as to constrain the utmost sincerity and

destroy all hope of trifling with you. It is the highest compliment you can pay. Their "highest praising," said Milton, "is not flattery, and their plainest advice is a kind of praising."

Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable. It inspires awe and astonishment. How dear, how soothing to man, arises the idea of God, peopling the lonely place, effacing the scars of our mistakes and disappointments! When we have broken our god of tradition and ceased from our god of rhetoric, then may God fire the heart with his presence. It is the doubling of the heart itself—nay, the infinite enlargement of the heart with a power of growth to a new infinity on every side. It inspires in man an infallible trust. He has not the conviction, but the sight, that the best is the true, and may in that thought easily dismiss all particular uncertainties and fears, and adjourn to the sure revelation of time the solution of his private riddles. He is sure that his welfare is dear to the heart of being. In the presence of law to his mind he is overflowed with a reliance so universal that it sweeps away all cherished hopes and the most stable projects of mortal condition in its flood. He believes that he cannot escape from his good. The things that are really for thee gravitate to thee. You are running to seek your friend. Let your feet run, but your mind need not. If you do not find him, will you not acquiesce that it is best you should not find him? for there is a power, which, as it is in you, is in him also, and could therefore very well bring you together, if it were for the best. You are preparing with eagerness to go and render a service to which your talent and your taste invite you, the love of men and the hope of fame. Has it not occurred to you that you have no right to go, unless you are equally willing to be prevented from going? O, believe, as thou livest, that every sound that is spoken over the round world, which thou oughtest to hear, will vibrate on thine ear! Every proverb, every book, every byword that belongs to thee for aid or comfort, shall surely come home through open or winding passages. Every friend whom not thy fantastic will, but the great and tender heart in thee, craveth shall lock thee in his embrace. And this because the heart in thee is the heart of all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection is there anywhere in nature, but one blood rolls uninterruptedly an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and, truly seen, its tide is one.

Let man, then, learn the revelation of all nature and all thought to his heart—this, namely, that the Highest dwells with him; that the sources of nature are in his own mind, if the sentiment of duty is there. But if he would know what the great God speaketh, he must "go into his closet and shut the door," as Jesus said. God will not make himself manifest to cowards. He must greatly listen to himself, withdrawing himself from all the accents of other men's devotion. Even their prayers are hurtful to him, until he have made his own. Our religion vulgarly stands on numbers of believers. Whenever the appeal is made—no matter how indirectly—to numbers, proclamation is then and there made that religion is not. He that finds God a sweet enveloping thought to him never counts his company. When I sit in that presence, who shall dare to come in? When I rest in perfect humility, when I burn with pure love, what can Calvin or Swedenborg say?

It makes no difference whether the appeal is to numbers or to one. The faith that stands on authority is not faith. The reliance on authority measures the decline of religion, the withdrawal of the soul. The position men have given to Jesus, now for many centuries of history, is a position of authority. It characterises themselves. It cannot alter the eternal facts. Great is the soul, and

plain. It is no flatterer, it is no follower; it never appeals from itself. It believes in itself. Before the immense possibilities of man all mere experience, all past biography, however spotless and sainted, shrinks away. Before that heaven which our presentiments foreshow us we cannot easily praise any form of life we have seen or read of. We not only affirm that we have few great men, but, absolutely speaking, that we have none; that we have no history, no record of any character or mode of living that entirely contents us. The saints and demigods whom history worships we are constrained to accept with a grain of allowance. Though in our lonely hours we draw a new strength out of their memory, yet, pressed on our attention as they are by the thoughtless and customary, they fatigue and invade. The soul gives itself, alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it. Then is it glad, young, and nimble. It is not wise, but it sees through all things. It is not called religious, but it is innocent. It calls the light its own, and feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to, and dependent on, its nature. Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect. I am somehow receptive of the great soul, and thereby I do overlook the sun and the stars, and feel them to be the fair accidents and effects which change and pass. More and more the surges of everlasting nature enter into me, and I become public and human in my regards and actions. So come I to live in thoughts and act with energies which are immortal. Thus revering the soul, and learning, as the ancient said, that "its beauty is immense," man will come to see that the world is the perennial miracle which the soul worketh, and be less astonished at particular wonders; he will learn that there is no profane history; that all history is sacred; that the universe is represented in an atom, in a moment of time. He will weave no longer a spotted life of shreds and patches, but he will live with a divine unity. He will cease from what is base and frivolous in his life, and be content with all places and with any service he can render. He will calmly front the morrow in the negligency of that trust which carries God with it, and so hath already the whole future in the bottom of the heart.

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# IMMORTALITY

In the year 626 of our era, when Edwin, the Anglo-Saxon king, was deliberating on receiving the Christian missionaries, one of his nobles said to him: "The present life of man, O king, compared with that space of time beyond, of which we have no certainty, reminds me of one of your winter feasts, where you sit with your generals and ministers. The hearth blazes in the middle, and a grateful heat is spread around, while storms of rain and snow are raging without. Driven by the chilling tempest, a little sparrow enters at one door and flies delighted around us till it departs through the other. While it stays in our mansion it feels not the winter storm; but when this short moment of happiness has been enjoyed, it is forced again into the same dreary tempest from which it has escaped, and

we behold it no more. Such is the life of man, and we are as ignorant of the state which preceded our present existence as of that which will follow it. Things being so, I feel that, if this new faith can give us more certainty, it deserves to be received."

In the first records of a nation in any degree thoughtful and cultivated some belief in the life beyond life would, of course, be suggested. The Egyptian people furnish us the earliest details of an established civilisation, and I read in the second book of Herodotus this memorable sentence: "The Egyptians are the first of mankind who have affirmed the immortality of the soul." Nor do I read it with less interest that the historian connects it presently with the doctrine of metempsychosis; for I know well that, where this belief once existed, it would necessarily take a base form for the savage and a pure form for the wise—so that I only look on the counterfeit as a proof that the genuine faith had been there. The credence of men, more than race or climate, makes their manners and customs; and the history of religion may be read in the forms of sepulture. There never was a time when the doctrine of a future life was not held. Morals must be enjoined, but among rude men moral judgments were rudely figured under the forms of dogs and whips, or of an easier and more plentiful life after death. And as the savage could not detach in his mind the life of the soul from the body, he took great care for his body. Thus the whole life of man in the first ages was ponderously determined on death; and, as we know, the polity of the Egyptians, the by-laws of towns, of streets and houses, respected burial. It made every man an undertaker, and the priesthood a senate of sextons. Every palace was a door to a pyramid; a king or rich man was a *pyramidaire*. The labour of races was spent on the excavation of catacombs. The chief end of man being to be buried well, the arts most in request were masonry and embalming, to give imperishability to the corpse.

The Greek, with his perfect senses and perceptions, had quite another philosophy. He loved life and delighted in beauty. He set his wit and taste, like elastic gas, under these mountains of stone, and lifted them. He drove away the embalmers; he built no more of those doleful mountainous tombs. He adorned death, brought wreaths of parsley and laurel; made it bright with games of strength and skill, and chariot-races. He looked at death only as the distributor of imperishable glory. Nothing can excel the beauty of his sarcophagus. He carried his arts to Rome, and built his beautiful tombs at Pompeii. The poet Shelley says of these delicately carved white marble cells: "They seem not so much hiding places of that which must decay as voluptuous chambers for immortal spirits." In the same spirit the modern Greeks, in their songs, ask that they may be buried where the sun can see them, and that a little window may be cut in the sepulchre, from which the swallow might be seen when it comes back in the spring.

Christianity brought a new wisdom. But learning depends on the learner. No more truth can be conveyed than the popular mind can bear, and the barbarians who received the cross took the doctrine of the resurrection as the Egyptians took it. It was an affair of the body, and narrowed again by the fury of sect; so that grounds were sprinkled with holy water to receive only orthodox dust; and, to keep the body still more sacredly safe for resurrection, it was put into the walls of the church; and the churches of Europe are really sepulchres. I read at Melrose Abbey the inscription on the ruined gate:—

"The Earth goes on the Earth glittering with gold;
The Earth goes to the Earth sooner than it wold;
The Earth builds on the Earth castles and towers;
The Earth says to the Earth, All this is ours."

Meantime the true disciples saw, through the letter, the doctrine of eternity, which

dissolved the poor corpse and nature also, and gave grandeur to the passing hour. The most remarkable step in the religious history of recent ages is that made by the genius of Swedenborg, who described the moral faculties and affections of man with the hard realism of an astronomer describing the suns and planets of our system, and explained his opinion of the history and destiny of souls in a narrative form, as of one who had gone in a trance into the society of other worlds. Swedenborg described an intelligible heaven by continuing the like employments in the like circumstances as those we know; men in societies, in houses, towns, trades, entertainments; continuations of our earthly experience. We shall pass to the future existence as we enter into an agreeable dream. All nature will accompany us there. Milton anticipated the leading thought of Swedenborg when he wrote, in *Paradise Lost*:—

> "What if Earth
> Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
> Each to the other like more than on earth is thought?"

Swedenborg had a vast genius, and announced many things true and admirable, though always clothed in somewhat sad and Stygian colours. These truths, passing out of his system into general circulation, are now met with every day, qualifying the views and creeds of all Churches and of men of no Church. And I think we are all aware of a revolution in opinion. Sixty years ago the books read, the sermons and prayers heard, the habits of thought of religious persons, were all directed on death. All were under the shadow of Calvinism and of the Roman Catholic purgatory, and death was dreadful. The emphasis of all the good books given to young people was on death. We were all taught that we were born to die; and over that all the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the gloom. A great change has occurred. Death is seen as a natural event, and is met with firmness. A wise man in our time caused to be written on his tomb, "Think on living." That inscription describes a progress in opinion. Cease from this antedating of your experience. Sufficient to to-day are the duties of to-day. Don't waste life in doubts and fears; spend yourself on the work before you, well assured that the right performance of this hour's duties will be the best preparation for the hours or ages that follow it:—

> "The name of death was never terrible
> To him that knew to live."

A man of thought is willing to die, willing to live; I suppose because he has seen the thread on which the beads are strung, and perceived that it reaches up and down, existing quite independently of the present illusions. A man of affairs is afraid to die, is pestered with terrors, because he has not this vision, and is the victim of those who have moulded the religious doctrines into some neat and plausible system, as Calvinism, Romanism, or Swedenborgism, for household use. It is the fear of the young bird to trust its wings. The experiences of the soul will fast outgrow this alarm. The saying of Marcus Antoninus it were hard to mend: "It is well to die if there be gods, and sad to live if there be none." I think all sound minds rest on a certain preliminary conviction—namely, that if it be best that conscious personal life shall continue, it will continue; if not best, then it will not; and we, if we saw the whole, should of course see that it was better so. Schiller said: "What is so universal as death must be benefit." A friend of Michel Angelo, saying to him that his constant labour for art must make him think of death with regret—"By no means," he said; "for if life be a pleasure, yet, since death also is sent by the hand of the same Master, neither should that displease us." Plutarch, in Greece, has a deep faith that the doctrine of the Divine Providence and that of the immortality of the soul rest on one and the same basis. Hear the opinion of

Montesquieu: "If the immortality of the soul were an error, I should be sorry not to believe it. I avow that I am not so humble as the atheist; I know not how they think, but for me, I do not wish to exchange the idea of immortality against that of the beatitude of one day. I delight in believing myself as immortal as God himself. Independently of revealed ideas, metaphysical ideas give me a vigorous hope of my eternal well-being, which I would never renounce."[1]

I was lately told of young children who feel a certain terror at the assurance of life without end. "What! will it never stop?" the child said; "what! never die? *never*, never? It makes me feel so tired." And I have in mind the expression of an older believer, who once said to me: "The thought that this frail being is never to end is so overwhelming that my only shelter is God's presence." This disquietude only marks the transition. The healthy state of mind is the love of life. What is so good, let it endure.

I find that what is called great and powerful life—the administration of large affairs, in commerce, in the courts, in the State—is prone to develop narrow and special talent; but, unless combined with a certain contemplative turn, a taste for abstract truth, for the moral laws, does not build up faith or lead to content. There is a profound melancholy at the base of men of active and powerful talent, seldom suspected. Many years ago there were two men in the United States Senate, both of whom are now dead. I have seen them both; one of them I personally knew. Both were men of distinction and took an active part in the politics of their day and generation. They were men of intellect, and one of them, at a later period, gave to a friend this anecdote. He said that when he entered the Senate he became in a short time intimate with one of his colleagues, and, though attentive enough to the routine of public duty, they daily returned to each other, and spent much time in conversation on the immortality of the soul and other intellectual questions, and cared for little else. When my friend at last left Congress, they parted, his colleague remaining there; and, as their homes were widely distant from each other, it chanced that he never met him again until, twenty-five years afterwards, they saw each other through open doors at a distance in a crowded reception at the President's house in Washington. Slowly they advanced towards each other as they could, through the brilliant company, and at last met—said nothing, but shook hands long and cordially. At last his friend said: "Any light, Albert?" "None," replied Albert. "Any light, Lewis?" "None," replied he. They looked in each other's eyes silently, gave one more shake each to the hand he held, and thus parted for the last time. Now, I should say that the impulse which drew these minds to this inquiry through so many years was a better affirmative evidence than their failure to find a confirmation was negative. I ought to add that, though men of good minds, they were both pretty strong materialists in their daily aims and way of life. I admit that you shall find a good deal of scepticism in the streets and hotels and places of coarse amusement. But that is only to say that the practical faculties are faster developed than the spiritual. Where there is depravity there is a slaughter-house style of thinking. One argument of future life is the recoil of the mind in such company—our pain at every sceptical statement. The sceptic affirms that the universe is a nest of boxes with nothing in the last box. All laughter at man is bitter, and puts us out of good activity. When Bonaparte insisted that the heart is one of the entrails, that it is the pit of the stomach that moves the world—do we thank him for the gracious instruction? Our disgust is the protest of human nature against a lie.

The ground of hope is in the infinity of the world; which infinity reappears

[1] *Pensées Diverses*, p. 223.

in every particle, the powers of all society in every individual, and of all mind in every mind. I know against all appearances that the universe can receive no detriment; that there is a remedy for every wrong and a satisfaction for every soul. Here is this wonderful thought. But whence came it? Who put it in the mind? It was not I, it was not you; it is elemental—belongs to thought and virtue, and whenever we have either we see the beams of this light. When the Master of the universe has points to carry in his government he impresses his will in the structure of minds.

But proceeding to the enumeration of the few simple elements of the natural faith, the first fact that strikes us is our delight in permanence. All great natures are lovers of stability and permanence, as the type of the Eternal. After science begins, belief of permanence must follow in a healthy mind. Things so attractive, designs so wise, the secret workman so transcendently skilful that it tasks successive generations of observers only to find out, part with part, the delicate contrivance and adjustment of a weed, of a moss, to its wants, growth, and perpetuation; all these adjustments becoming perfectly intelligible to our study—and the contriver of it all forever hidden! To breathe, to sleep, is wonderful. But never to know the Cause, the Giver, and infer his character and will! Of what import this vacant sky, these puffing elements, these insignificant lives full of selfish loves and quarrels and ennui? Everything is prospective, and man is to live hereafter. That the world is for his education is the only sane solution of the enigma. And I think that the naturalist works not for himself, but for the believing mind, which turns his discoveries to revelations, receives them as private tokens of the grand good-will of the Creator.

The mind delights in immense time; delights in rocks, in metals, in mountain-chains, and in the evidence of vast geologic periods which these give; in the age of trees, say of the Sequoias, a few of which will span the whole history of mankind; in the noble toughness and imperishableness of the palm-tree, which thrives under abuse; delights in architecture, whose building lasts so long—"A house," says Ruskin, "is not in its prime until it is five hundred years old"—and here are the Pyramids, which have as many thousands, and cromlechs and earth-mounds much older than these.

We delight in stability, and really are interested in nothing that ends. What lasts a century pleases us in comparison with what lasts an hour. But a century, when we have once made it familiar and compared it with a true antiquity, looks dwarfish and recent; and it does not help the matter adding numbers, if we see that it has an end, which it will reach just as surely as the shortest. A candle a mile long or a hundred miles long does not help the imagination; only a self-feeding fire, an inextinguishable lamp, like the sun and the star, that we have not yet found date and origin for. But the nebular theory threatens their duration also, bereaves them of this glory, and will make a shift to eke out a sort of eternity by succession, as plants and animals do.

And what are these delights in the vast and permanent and strong but approximations and resemblances of what is entire and sufficing, creative and self-sustaining life? For the Creator keeps his word with us. These long-lived or long-enduring objects are to us, as we see them, only symbols of somewhat in us far longer-lived. Our passions, our endeavours, have something ridiculous and mocking, if we come to so hasty an end. If not to *be*, how like the bells of a fool is the trump of fame! Nature does not, like the Empress Anne of Russia, call together all the architectural genius of the Empire to build and finish and furnish a palace of snow, to melt again to water in the first thaw. Will you, with vast cost and pains, educate your children to be adepts in their several arts, and, as soon as they are ready to produce a masterpiece, call out a file of

soldiers to shoot them down? We must infer our destiny from the preparation. We are driven by instinct to hive innumerable experiences which are of no visible value, and we may revolve through many lives before we shall assimilate or exhaust them. Now there is nothing in nature capricious, or whimsical, or accidental, or unsupported. Nature never moves by jumps, but always in steady and supported advances. The implanting of a desire indicates that the gratification of that desire is in the constitution of the creature that feels it; the wish for food, the wish for motion, the wish for sleep, for society, for knowledge, are not random whims, but grounded in the structure of the creature, and meant to be satisfied by food, by motion, by sleep, by society, by knowledge. If there is the desire to live, and in larger sphere, with more knowledge and power, it is because life and knowledge and power are good for us, and we are the natural depositories of these gifts. The love of life is out of all proportion to the value set on a single day, and seems to indicate, like all our other experiences, a conviction of immense resources and possibilities proper to us, on which we have never drawn.

All the comfort I have found teaches me to confide that I shall not have less in times and places that I do not yet know. I have known admirable persons, without feeling that they exhaust the possibilities of virtue and talent. I have seen what glories of climate, of summer mornings and evenings, of midnight sky; I have enjoyed the benefits of all this complex machinery of arts and civilisation, and its results of comfort. The good Power can easily provide me millions more as good. Shall I hold on with both hands to every paltry possession? All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen. Whatever it be which the great Providence prepares for us, it must be something large and generous, and in the great style of his works. The future must be up to the style of our faculties—of memory, of hope, of imagination, of reason. I have a house, a closet which holds my books, a table, a garden, a field: are these, any or all, a reason for refusing the angel who beckons me away—as if there were no room or skill elsewhere that could reproduce for me as my like or my enlarging wants may require? We wish to live for what is great, not for what is mean. I do not wish to live for the sake of my warm house, my orchard, or my pictures. I do not wish to live to wear out my boots.

As a hint of endless being, we may rank that novelty which perpetually attends life. The soul does not age with the body. On the borders of the grave the wise man looks forward with equal elasticity of mind, or hope; and why not, after millions of years, on the verge of still newer existence?—for it is the nature of intelligent beings to be forever new to life. Most men are insolvent, or promise by their countenance and conversation and by their early endeavour much more than they ever perform—suggesting a design still to be carried out; the man must have new motives, new companions, new condition, and another term. Franklin said: "Life is rather a state of embryo, a preparation for life. A man is not completely born until he has passed through death." Every really able man, in whatever direction he work—a man of large affairs, an inventor, a statesman, an orator, a poet, a painter—if you talk sincerely with him, considers his work, however much admired, as far short of what it should be. What is this Better, this flying Ideal, but the perpetual promise of his Creator?

The fable of the Wandering Jew is agreeable to men, because they want more time and land in which to execute their thoughts. But a higher poetic use must be made of the legend. Take us as we are, with our experience, and transfer us to a new planet, and let us digest for its inhabitants what we could of the wisdom of this. After we have found our depth there, and assimilated what we could of the new experience,

transfer us to a new scene. In each transfer we shall have acquired, by seeing them at a distance, a new mastery of the old thoughts, in which we were too much immersed. In short, all our intellectual action, not promises, but bestows a feeling of absolute existence. We are taken out of time and breathe a purer air. I know not whence we draw the assurance of prolonged life, of a life which shoots that gulf we call death, and takes hold of what is real and abiding, by so many claims as from our intellectual history. Salt is a good preserver; cold is; but a truth cures the taint of mortality better, and "preserves from harm until another period." A sort of absoluteness attends all perception of truth—no smell of age, no hint of corruption. It is self-sufficing, sound, entire.

Lord Bacon said: "Some of the philosophers who were least divine denied generally the immortality of the soul, yet came to this point, that whatsoever motions the spirit of man could act and perform without the organs of the body might remain after death; which were only those of the understanding, and not of the affections; so immortal and incorruptible a thing did knowledge seem to them to be." And Van Helmont, the philosopher of Holland, drew his sufficient proof purely from the action of the intellect. "It is my greatest desire," he said, "that it might be granted unto atheists to have tasted, at least but one only moment, what it is intellectually to understand; whereby they may feel the immortality of the mind, as it were by touching." A farmer, a labourer, a mechanic, is driven by his work all day, but it ends at night; it has an end. But, as far as the mechanic or farmer is also a scholar or thinker, his work has no end. That which he has learned is that there is much more to be learned. The wiser he is, he feels only the more his incompetence. "What we know is a point to what we do not know." A thousand years—tenfold, a hundredfold his faculties, would not suffice. The demands of his task are such that it becomes omnipresent. He studies in his walking, at his meals, in his amusements, even in his sleep. Montesquieu said: "The love of study is in us almost the only eternal passion. All the others quit us in proportion as this miserable machine which holds them approaches its ruin." "Art is long," says the thinker, "and life is short." He is but as a fly or a worm to this mountain, this continent, which his thoughts inhabit. It is a perception that comes by the activity of the intellect; never to the lazy or rusty mind. Courage comes naturally to those who have the habit of facing labour and danger, and who therefore know the power of their arms and bodies; and courage or confidence in the mind comes to those who know by use its wonderful forces and inspirations and returns. Belief in its future is a reward kept only for those who use it. "To me," said Goethe, "the eternal existence of my soul is proved from my idea of activity. If I work incessantly till my death, nature is bound to give me another form of existence when the present can no longer sustain my spirit."

It is a proverb of the world that goodwill makes intelligence, that goodness itself is an eye; and the one doctrine in which all religions agree is that new light is added to the mind in proportion as it uses that which it has. "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Ignorant people confound reverence for the intuitions with egotism. There is no confusion in the things themselves. The health of the mind consists in the perception of law. Its dignity consists in being under the law. Its goodness is the most generous extension of our private interests to the dignity and generosity of ideas. Nothing seems to me so excellent as a belief in the laws. It communicates nobleness, and, as it were, an asylum in temples to the loyal soul.

I confess that everything connected with our personality fails. Nature never spares the individual; we are always

balked of a complete success: no prosperity is promised to our self-esteem. We have our indemnity only in the moral and intellectual reality to which we aspire. That is immortal, and we only through that. The soul stipulates for no private good. That which is private I see not to be good. "If truth live, I live; if justice live, I live," said one of the old saints, "and these by any man's suffering are enlarged and enthroned."

The moral sentiment measures itself by sacrifice. It risks or ruins property, health, life itself, without hesitation, for its thought, and all men justify the man by their praise for this act. And Mohammed in the same mind declared: "Not dead but living ye are to account all those who are slain in the way of God."

On these grounds I think that, wherever man ripens, this audacious belief presently appears—in the savage, savagely; in the good, purely. As soon as thought is exercised, this belief is inevitable; as soon as virtue glows, this belief confirms itself. It is a kind of summary or completion of man. It cannot rest on a legend; it cannot be quoted from one to another; it must have the assurance of a man's faculties that they can fill a larger theatre and a longer term than nature here allows him. Goethe said: "It is to a thinking being quite impossible to think himself non-existent, ceasing to think and live; so far does every one carry in himself the proof of immortality, and quite spontaneously. But so soon as the man will be objective and go out of himself, so soon as he dogmatically will grasp a personal duration to bolster up in cockney fashion that inward assurance, he is lost in contradiction." The doctrine is not sentimental, but is grounded in the necessities and forces we possess. Nothing will hold but that which we must be and must do:—

> "Man's heart the Almighty to the Future set
> By secret but inviolable springs."

The revelation that is true is written on the palms of the hands, the thought of our mind, the desire of our heart, or nowhere. My idea of heaven is that there is no melodrama in it at all; that it is wholly real. Here is the emphasis of conscience and experience; this is no speculation, but the most practical of doctrines. Do you think that the eternal chain of cause and effect which pervades nature, which threads the globes as beads on a string, leaves this out of its circuit—leaves out this desire of God and men as a waif and a caprice, altogether cheap and common, and falling without reason or merit?

We live by desire to live; we live by choice; by will, by thought, by virtue, by the vivacity of the laws which we obey, and obeying share their life—or we die by sloth, by disobedience, by losing hold of life, which ebbs out of us. But while I find the signatures, the hints and suggestions, noble and wholesome—while I find that all the ways of virtuous living lead upward and not downward—yet it is not my duty to prove to myself the immortality of the soul. That knowledge is hidden very cunningly. Perhaps the archangels cannot find the secret of their existence, as the eye cannot see itself; but, ending or endless, to live while I live.

There is a drawback to the value of all statements of the doctrine, and I think that one abstains from writing or printing on the immortality of the soul, because, when he comes to the end of his statement, the hungry eyes that run through it will close disappointed. The listeners say: That is not here which we desire; and I shall be as much wronged by their hasty conclusions as they feel themselves wronged by my omissions. I mean that I am a better believer, and all serious souls are better believers in the immortality, than we can give grounds for. The real evidence is too subtle, or is higher than we can write down in propositions, and therefore Wordsworth's "Ode" is the best modern essay on the subject.

We cannot prove our faith by syllogisms. The argument refuses to form in

the mind. A conclusion, an inference, a grand augury, is ever hovering, but attempt to ground it, and the reasons are all vanishing and inadequate. You cannot make a written theory or demonstration of this as you can an orrery of the Copernican astronomy. It must be sacredly treated. Speak of the mount in the mount. Not by literature or theology, but only by rare integrity, by a man permeated and perfumed with airs of heaven—with manliest or womanliest enduring love—can the vision be clear to a use the most sublime. And hence the fact that in the minds of men the testimony of a few inspired souls has had such weight and penetration. You shall not say: "O my bishop, O my pastor, is there any resurrection? What do you think? Did Dr. Channing believe that we should know each other? Did Wesley? Did Butler? Did Fénelon?" What questions are these! Go, read Milton, Shakespeare, or any truly ideal poet. Read Plato, or any seer of the interior realities. Read St. Augustine, Swedenborg, Immanuel Kant. Let any master simply recite to you the substantial laws of the intellect, and in the presence of the laws themselves you will never ask such primary-school questions.

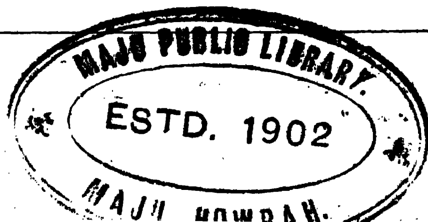
Is immortality only an intellectual quality, or, shall I say, only an energy, there being no passive? He has it, and he alone, who gives life to all names, persons, things, where he comes. No religion, not the wildest mythology, dies for him; no art is lost. He vivifies what he touches. Future state is an illusion for the ever-present state. It is not length of life, but depth of life. It is not duration, but a taking of the soul out of time, as all high action of the mind does; when we are living in the sentiments we ask no questions about time. The spiritual world takes place; that which is always the same. But see how the sentiment is wise. Jesus explained nothing, but the influence of him took people out of time, and they felt eternal. A great integrity makes us immortal; an admiration, a deep love, a strong will, arms us above fear. It makes a day memorable. We say we lived years in that hour. It is strange that Jesus is esteemed by mankind the bringer of the doctrine of immortality. He is never once weak or sentimental; he is very abstemious of explanation; he never preaches the personal immortality; while Plato and Cicero had both allowed themselves to overstep the stern limits of the spirit, and gratify the people with that picture.

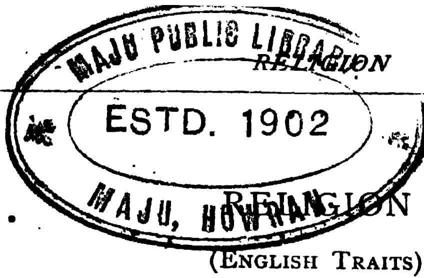
How ill agrees this majestical immortality of our religion with the frivolous population! Will you build magnificently for mice? Will you offer empires to such as cannot set a house or private affairs in order? Here are people who cannot dispose of a day; an hour hangs heavy on their hands; and will you offer them rolling ages without end? But this is the way we rise. Within every man's thought is a higher thought—within the character he exhibits to-day, a higher character. The youth puts off the illusions of the child, the man puts off the ignorance and tumultuous passions of youth; proceeding thence puts off the egotism of manhood, and becomes at last a public and universal soul. He is rising to greater heights, but also rising to realities; the outer relations and circumstances dying out, he entering deeper into God, God into him, until the last garment of egotism falls, and he is with God—shares the will and the immensity of the First Cause.

It is curious to find the self-same feeling, that it is not immortality, but eternity—not duration, but a state of abandonment to the Highest, and so the sharing of His perfection—appearing in the farthest east and west. The human mind takes no account of geography, language, or legends, but in all utters the same instinct.

Yama, the lord of Death, promised Nachiketas, the son of Gautama, to grant him three boons at his own choice. Nachiketas, knowing that his father Gautama was offended with him, said: "O Death! let Gautama be appeased in

mind, and forget his anger against me: this I choose for the first boon." Yama said: "Through my favour, Gautama will remember thee with love as before." For the second boon, Nachiketas asks that the fire by which heaven is gained be made known to him; which also Yama allows, and says: "Choose the third boon, O Nachiketas!" Nachiketas said, there is this inquiry. Some say the soul exists after the death of man; others say it does not exist. This I should like to know, instructed by thee. Such is the third of the boons. Yama said: "For this question, it was inquired of old, even by the gods; for it is not easy to understand it. Subtle is its nature. Choose another boon, O Nachiketas! Do not compel me to this." Nachiketas said: "Even by the gods was it inquired. And as to what thou sayest, O Death, that it is not easy to understand it, there is no other speaker to be found like thee. There is no other boon like this." Yama said: "Choose sons and grandsons who may live a hundred years; choose herds of cattle; choose elephants and gold and horses; choose the wide expanded earth, and live thyself as many years as thou listeth. Or, if thou knowest a boon like this, choose it together with wealth and far-extending life. Be a king, O Nachiketas! On the wide earth I will make thee the enjoyer of all desires. All those desires that are difficult to gain in the world of mortals, all those ask thou at thy pleasure—those fair nymphs of heaven with their chariots, with their musical instruments; for the like of them are not to be gained by men. I will give them to thee, but do not ask the question of the state of the soul after death." Nachiketas said: "All those enjoyments are of yesterday. With thee remain thy horses and elephants, with thee the dance and song. If we should obtain wealth, we live only as long as thou pleasest. The boon which I choose I have said." Yama said: "One thing is good, another is pleasant. Blessed is he who takes the good, but he who chooses the pleasant loses the object of man. But thou, considering the objects of desire, hast abandoned them. These two, ignorance (whose object is what is pleasant) and knowledge (whose object is what is good), are known to be far asunder, and to lead to different goals. Believing this world exists, and not the other, the careless youth is subject to my sway. That knowledge for which thou hast asked is not to be obtained by argument. I know worldly happiness is transient, for that firm one is not to be obtained by what is not firm. The wise, by means of the union of the intellect with the soul, thinking him whom it is hard to behold, leaves both grief and joy. Thee, O Nachiketas! I believe a house whose door is open to Brahma. Brahma, the supreme, whoever knows him obtains whatever he wishes. The soul is not born; it does not die; it was not produced from any one. Nor was any produced from it. Unborn, eternal, it is not slain, though the body is slain; subtler than what is subtle, greater than what is great, sitting it goes far, sleeping it goes everywhere. Thinking the soul as unbodily among bodies, firm among fleeting things, the wise man casts off all grief. The soul cannot be gained by knowledge, not by understanding, not by manifold science. It can be obtained by the soul by which it is desired. It reveals its own truths."






# RELIGION

(ENGLISH TRAITS)

No people at the present day can be explained by their national religion. They do not feel responsible for it; it lies far outside of them. Their loyalty to truth and their labour and expenditure rest on real foundations, and not on a national Church. And English life, it is evident, does not grow out of the Athanasian Creed, or the Articles, or the Eucharist. It is with religion as with marriage. A youth marries in haste; afterwards, when his mind is opened to the reason of the conduct of life, he is asked what he thinks of the institution of marriage and of the right relations of the sexes. "I should have much to say," he might reply, "if the question were open, but I have a wife and children, and all question is closed for me." In the barbarous days of a nation some *cultus* is formed or imported; altars are built, tithes are paid, priests ordained. The education and expenditure of the country take that direction, and when wealth, refinement, great men, and ties to the world supervene, its prudent men say, Why fight against Fate, or lift these absurdities which are now mountainous? Better find some niche or crevice in this mountain of stone which religious ages have quarried and carved, wherein to bestow yourself, than attempt anything ridiculously and dangerously above your strength, like removing it.

In seeing old castles and cathedrals, I sometimes say, as to-day in front of Dundee Church tower, which is eight hundred years old: "This was built by another and a better race than any that now look on it." And plainly there has been great power of sentiment at work in this island, of which these buildings are the proofs; as volcanic basalts show the work of fire which has been extinguished for ages. England felt the full heat of the Christianity which fermented Europe, and drew, like the chemistry of fire, a firm line between barbarism and culture. The power of the religious sentiment put an end to human sacrifices, checked appetite, inspired the crusades, inspired resistance to tyrants, inspired self-respect, set bounds to serfdom and slavery, founded liberty, created the religious architecture—York, Newstead, Westminster, Fountains Abbey, Ripon, Beverley, and Dundee—works to which the key is lost, with the sentiment which created them; inspired the English Bible, the liturgy, the monkish histories, the chronicle of Richard of Devizes. The priest translated the Vulgate, and translated the sanctities of old hagiology into English virtues on English ground. It was a certain affirmative or aggressive state of the Caucasian races. Man awoke refreshed by the sleep of ages. The violence of the northern savages exasperated Christianity into power. It lived by the love of the people. Bishop Wilfrid manumitted two hundred and fifty serfs, whom he found attached to the soil. The clergy obtained respite from labour for the boor on the Sabbath and on Church festivals. "The lord who compelled his boor to labour between sunset on Saturday and sunset on Sunday forfeited him altogether." The priest came out of the people and sympathised with his class. The Church was the mediator, check and democratic principle, in Europe. Latimer, Wicliffe, Arundel, Cobham, Antony Parsons, Sir Harry Vane, George Fox, Penn, Bunyan, are the democrats as well as the saints of their times. The Catholic Church, thrown on this toiling, serious people, has made in fourteen centuries a massive system, close fitted to the manners and

genius of the country, at once domestical and stately. In the long time it has blended with everything in heaven above and the earth beneath. It moves through a zodiac of feasts and fasts, names every day of the year, every town and market and headland and monument, and has coupled itself with the almanack, that no court can be held, no field ploughed, no horse shod, without some leave from the Church. All maxims of prudence or shop or farm are fixed and dated by the Church. Hence its strength in the agricultural districts. The distribution of land into parishes enforces a Church sanction to every civil privilege; and the gradation of the clergy—prelates for the rich and curates for the poor—with the fact that a classical education has been secured to the clergyman, makes them "the link which unites the sequestered peasantry with the intellectual advancement of the age."[1]

The English Church has many certificates to show of humble effective service in humanising the people, in cheering and refining men, feeding, healing, and educating. It has the seal of martyrs and confessors; the noblest books; a sublime architecture; a ritual marked by the same secular merits, nothing cheap or purchasable.

From this slow-grown Church important reactions proceed; much for culture, much for giving a direction to the nation's affection and will to-day. The carved and pictured chapel—its entire surface animated with image and emblem—made the parish church a sort of book and Bible to the people's eye.

Then, when the Saxon instinct had secured a service in the vernacular tongue, it was the tutor and university of the people. In York Minster, on the day of the enthronisation of the new archbishop, I heard the service of evening prayer read and chanted in the choir. It was strange to hear the pretty pastoral of the betrothal of Rebecca and Isaac, in the morning of the world, read with circumstantiality in York Minster, on the 13th January, 1848, to the decorous English audience, just fresh from the *Times* newspaper and their wine, and listening with all the devotion of national pride. That was binding old and new to some purpose. The reverence for the Scriptures is an element of civilisation, for thus has the history of the world been preserved and is preserved. Here in England every day a chapter of Genesis and a leader in the *Times*.

Another part of the same service on this occasion was not insignificant. Handel's coronation anthem, *God save the King*, was played by Dr. Camidge on the organ, with sublime effect. The minster and the music were made for each other. It was a hint of the part the Church plays as a political engine. From his infancy, every Englishman is accustomed to hear daily prayers for the queen, for the royal family and the Parliament, by name; and this lifelong consecration cannot be without influence on his opinions.

The universities also are parcel of the ecclesiastical system, and their first design is to form the clergy. Thus the clergy for a thousand years have been the scholars of the nation.

The national temperament deeply enjoys the unbroken order and tradition of its Church; the liturgy, ceremony, architecture; the sober grace, the good company, the connection with the throne and with history, which adorn it. And while it endears itself thus to men of more taste and activity, the stability of the English nation is passionately enlisted to its support, from its inextricable connection with the cause of public order, with politics, and with the funds.

Good Churches are not built by bad men; at least there must be probity and enthusiasm somewhere in the society. These minsters were neither built nor filled by atheists. No Church has had more learned, industrious, or devoted men; plenty of "clerks and bishops,

[1] Wordsworth.

who, out of their gowns, would turn their backs on no man."[1] Their architecture still glows with faith in immortality. Heats and genial periods arrive in history, or, shall we say, plenitudes of Divine Presence, by which high tides are caused in the human spirit, and great virtues and talents appear, as in the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the nation was full of genius and piety.

But the age of the Wicliffes, Cobhams, Arundels, Beckets; of the Latimers, Mores, Cranmers; of the Taylors, Leightons, Herberts; of the Sherlocks and Butlers, is gone. Silent revolutions in opinion have made it impossible that men like these should return, or find a place in their once sacred stalls. The spirit that dwelt in this Church has glided away to animate other activities, and they who come to the old shrines find apes and players rustling the old garments.

The religion of England is part of good-breeding. When you see on the continent the well-dressed Englishman come into his ambassador's chapel and put his face for silent prayer into his smooth-brushed hat, you cannot help feeling how much national pride prays with him, and the religion of a gentleman. So far is he from attaching any meaning to the words that he believes himself to have done almost the generous thing, and that it is very condescending in him to pray to God. A great duke said on the occasion of a victory, in the House of Lords, that he thought the Almighty God had not been well used by them, and that it would become their magnanimity, after so great successes, to take order that a proper acknowledgment be made. It is the Church of the gentry, but it is not the Church of the poor. The operatives do not own it, and gentlemen lately testified in the House of Commons that in their lives they never saw a poor man in a ragged coat inside a church.

[1] Fuller.

The torpidity on the side of religion of the vigorous English understanding shows how much wit and folly can agree in one brain. Their religion is a quotation; their Church is a doll; and any examination is interdicted with screams of terror. In good company you expect them to laugh at the fanaticism of the vulgar; but they do not: they are the vulgar.

The English, in common, perhaps, with Christendom in the nineteenth century, do not respect power, but only performance; value ideas only for an economic result. Wellington esteems a saint only as far as he can be an army chaplain: "Mr. Briscoll, by his admirable conduct and good sense, got the better of Methodism, which had appeared among the soldiers and once among the officers." They value a philosopher as they value an apothecary who brings bark or a drench; and inspiration is only some blowpipe, or a finer mechanical aid.

I suspect that there is in an Englishman's brain a valve that can be closed at pleasure, as an engineer shuts off steam. The most sensible and well-informed men possess the power of thinking just so far as the bishop in religious matters, and as the Chancellor of the Exchequer in politics. They talk with courage and logic, and show you magnificent results; but the same men who have brought free trade or geology to their present standing look grave and lofty and shut down their valve as soon as the conversation approaches the English Church. After that, you talk with a box-turtle.

The action of the university, both in what is taught and in the spirit of the place, is directed more on producing an English gentleman than a saint or a psychologist. It ripens a bishop, and extrudes a philosopher. I do not know that there is more cabalism in the Anglican than in other Churches, but the Anglican clergy are identified with the aristocracy. They say here that, if you talk with a clergyman, you are sure to find him well-bred, informed, and

candid; he entertains your thought or your project with sympathy and praise. But if a second clergyman come in, the sympathy is at an end: two together are inaccessible to your thought, and, whenever it comes to action the clergyman invariably sides with his Church.

The Anglican Church is marked by the grace and good sense of its forms, by the manly grace of its clergy. The gospel it preaches is, "By taste are ye saved." It keeps the old structures in repair, spends a world of money in music and building, and in buying Pugin and architectural literature. It has a general good name for amenity and mildness. It is not in ordinary a persecuting Church; it is not inquisitorial, not even inquisitive; is perfectly well-bred, and can shut its eyes on all proper occasions. If you let it alone, it will let you alone. But its instinct is hostile to all change in politics, literature, or social arts. The Church has not been the founder of the London University, of the Mechanics' Institutes, of the Free School, of whatever aims at diffusion of knowledge. The Platonists of Oxford are as bitter against this heresy as Thomas Taylor.

The doctrine of the Old Testament is the religion of England. The first leaf of the New Testament it does not open. It believes in a Providence which does not treat with levity a pound sterling. They are neither transcendentalists nor Christians. They put up no Socratic prayer, much less any saintly prayer for the queen's mind; ask neither for light nor right, but say bluntly: "Grant her in health and wealth long to live." And one traces this Jewish prayer in all English private history, from the prayers of King Richard, in Richard of Devizes' Chronicle, to those in the diaries of Sir Samuel Romilly and of Haydon the painter. "Abroad with my wife," writes Pepys piously, "the first time that ever I rode in my own coach; which do make my heart rejoice and praise God, and pray him to bless it to me, and continue it." The Bill for the naturalisation of the Jews (in 1753) was resisted by petitions from all parts of the kingdom, and by petition from the City of London, reprobating this Bill, as "tending extremely to the dishonour of the Christian religion, and extremely injurious to the interests and commerce of the kingdom in general, and of the City of London in particular."

But they have not been able to congeal humanity by Act of Parliament. "The heavens journey still and sojourn not," and arts, wars, discoveries, and opinion go onward at their own pace. The new age has new desires, new enemies, new trades, new charities, and reads the Scriptures with new eyes. The chatter of French politics, the steam-whistle, the hum of the mill and the noise of embarking emigrants, had quite put most of the old legends out of mind; so that, when you came to read the liturgy to a modern congregation it was almost absurd in its unfitness, and suggested a masquerade of old costumes.

No chemist has prospered in the attempt to crystallise a religion. It is endogenous, like the skin and other vital organs. A new statement every day. The prophet and apostle knew this, and the nonconformist confutes the conformists by quoting the texts they must allow. It is the condition of a religion to require religion for its expositor. Prophet and apostle can only be rightly understood by prophet and apostle. The statesman knows that the religious element will not fail, any more than the supply of fibrine and chyle; but it is in its nature constructive, and will organise such a Church as it wants. The wise legislator will spend on temples, schools, libraries, colleges, but will shun the enriching of priests. If in any manner he can leave the election and paying of the priests to the people, he will do well. Like the Quakers, he may resist the separation of a class of priests, and create opportunity and expectation in the society to run to meet natural endowment in this kind. But when wealth accrues to a chaplaincy, a bishopric, or rectorship, it requires monied men for

its stewards, who will give it another direction than to the mystics of their day. Of course, money will do after its kind, and will steadily work to unspiritualise and unchurch the people to whom it was bequeathed. The class certain to be excluded from all preferment are the religious—and driven to other Churches; which is nature's *vis medicatrix*.

The curates are ill-paid and the prelates are over-paid. This abuse draws into the Church the children of the nobility and other unfit persons who have a taste for expense. Thus a bishop is only a surpliced merchant. Through his lawn I can see the bright buttons of the shopman's coat glitter. A wealth like that of Durham makes almost a premium on felony. Brougham, in a speech in the House of Commons on the Irish elective franchise, said: "How will the reverend bishops of the other House be able to express their due abhorrence of the crime of perjury, who solemnly declare in the presence of God that when they are called upon to accept a living, perhaps of £4,000 a year, at that very instant they are moved by the Holy Ghost to accept the office and administration thereof, and for no other reason whatever?" The modes of initiation are more damaging than custom-house oaths. The Bishop is elected by the Dean and Prebends of the cathedral. The Queen sends these gentlemen a *congé d'élire*, or leave to elect; but also sends them the name of the person whom they are to elect. They go into the cathedral, chant and pray and beseech the Holy Ghost to assist them in their choice; and, after these invocations, invariably find that the dictates of the Holy Ghost agree with the recommendations of the Queen.

But you must pay for conformity. All goes well as long as you run with conformists. But you, who are an honest man in other particulars, know that there is alive somewhere a man whose honesty reaches to this point also that he shall not kneel to false gods, and on the day when you meet him you sink into the class of counterfeits. Besides, this succumbing has grave penalties. If you take in a lie, you must take in all that belongs to it. England accepts this ornamented national Church, and it glazes the eyes, bloats the flesh, gives the voice a stertorous clang, and clouds the understanding of the receivers.

The English Church, undermined by German criticism, had nothing left but tradition; and was led logically back to Romanism. But that was an element which only hot-heads could breathe; in view of the educated class, generally, it was not a fact to front the sun; and the alienation of such men from the Church became complete.

Nature, to be sure, had her remedy. Religious persons are driven out of the Established Church into sects, which instantly rise to credit and hold the Establishment in check. Nature has sharper remedies, also. The English, abhorring change in all things, abhorring it most in matters of religion, cling to the last rag of form, and are dreadfully given to cant. The English (and I wish it were confined to them, but 'tis a taint in the Anglo-Saxon blood in both hemispheres)—the English and the Americans cant beyond all other nations. The French relinquish all that industry to them. What is so odious as the polite bows to God in our books and newspapers? The popular press is flagitious in the exact measure of its sanctimony, and the religion of the day is a theatrical Sinai, where the thunders are supplied by the property-man. The fanaticism and hypocrisy create satire. *Punch* finds an inexhaustible material. Dickens writes novels on Exeter-Hall humanity Thackeray exposes the heartless high life. Nature revenges herself more summarily by the heathenism of the lower classes. Lord Shaftesbury calls the poor thieves together and reads sermons to them, and they call it "gas." George Borrow summons the Gipsies to hear his discourse on the Hebrews in Egypt, and reads to them the Apostles' Creed in Romany. "When I had concluded," he

says, "I looked around me. The features of the assembly were twisted, and the eyes of all turned upon me with a frightful squint: not an individual present but squinted; the genteel Pepa, the good-humoured Chicharona, the Cosdami, all squinted; the Gipsy jockey squinted worst of all."

The Church at this moment is much to be pitied. She has nothing left but possession. If a bishop meets an intelligent gentleman and reads fatal interrogations in his eyes, he has no resource but to take wine with him. False position introduces cant, perjury, simony, and ever a lower class of mind and character into the clergy; and, when the hierarchy is afraid of science and education, afraid of piety, afraid of tradition, and afraid of theology, there is nothing left but to quit a Church which is no longer one.

But the religion of England—is it the Established Church? No. Is it the sects? No. They are only perpetuations of some private man's dissent, and are to the Established Church as cabs are to a coach, cheaper and more convenient, but really the same thing. Where dwells the religion? Tell me first where dwells electricity, or motion, or thought, or gesture. They do not dwell or stay at all. Electricity cannot be made fast, mortared up and ended, like London Monument or the Tower, so that you shall know where to find it, and keep it fixed, as the English do with their things, for evermore; it is passing, glancing, gesticular; it is a traveller, a newness, a surprise, a secret, which perplexes them and puts them out. Yet, if religion be the doing of all good, and for its sake the suffering of all evil, *souffrir de tout le monde, et ne faire souffrir personne*, that divine secret has existed in England from the days of Alfred to those of Romilly, of Clarkson, and of Florence Nightingale, and in thousands who have no fame.

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# SOCIAL AIMS

Much ill-natured criticism has been directed on American manners. I do not think it is to be resented. Rather, if we are wise, we shall listen and mend. Our critics will then be our best friends, though they did not mean it. But in every sense the subject of manners has a constant interest to thoughtful persons. Who does not delight in fine manners? Their charm cannot be predicted or overstated. 'Tis perpetual promise of more than can be fulfilled. It is music and sculpture and picture to many who do not pretend to appreciation of those arts. It is even true that grace is more beautiful than beauty. Yet how impossible to overcome the obstacle of an unlucky temperament and acquire good manners, unless by living with the well-bred from the start; and this makes the value of wise forethought to give ourselves and our children as much as possible the habit of cultivated society.

'Tis an inestimable hint that I owe to a few persons of fine manners, that they make behaviour the very first sign of force—behaviour, and not performance, or talent, or, much less, wealth. While almost everybody has a supplicating eye turned on events and things and other persons, a few natures are central and forever unfold, and these alone charm us. He whose word or deed you cannot predict, who answers you without any supplication in his eye, who draws his

determination from within, and draws it instantly—that man rules.

The staple figure in novels is the man of *aplomb*, who sits, among the young aspirants and desperates, quite sure and compact, and, never sharing their affections or debilities, hurls his word like a bullet when occasion requires, knows his way, and carries his points. They may scream or applaud, he is never engaged or heated. Napoleon is the type of this class in modern history; Byron's heroes in poetry. But we for the most part are all drawn into the *charivari;* we chide, lament, cavil, and recriminate.

I think Hans Andersen's story of the cobweb cloth woven so fine that it was invisible—woven for the king's garment—must mean manners, which do really clothe a princely nature. Such a one can well go in a blanket, if he would. In the gymnasium or on the sea-beach his superiority does not leave him. But he who has not this fine garment of behaviour is studious of dress, and then not less of house and furniture and pictures and gardens, in all which he hopes to lie *perdu*, and not be exposed.

"Manners are stronger than laws." Their vast convenience I must always admire. The perfect defence and isolation which they effect makes an insuperable protection. Though the person so clothed wrestle with you, or swim with you, lodge in the same chamber, eat at the same table, he is yet a thousand miles off, and can at any moment finish with you. Manners seem to say, *You are you, and I am I.* In the most delicate natures, fine temperament and culture build this impassable wall. Balzac finely said: "Kings themselves cannot force the exquisite politeness of distance to capitulate, hid behind its shield of bronze."

Nature values manners. See how she has prepared for them. Who teaches manners of majesty, of frankness, of grace, of humility—who but the adoring aunts and cousins that surround a young child? The babe meets such courting and flattery as only kings receive when adult; and, trying experiments, and at perfect leisure with these posture-masters and flatterers all day, he throws himself into all the attitudes that correspond to theirs. Are they humble? he is composed. Are they eager? he is nonchalant. Are they encroaching? he is dignified and inexorable. And this scene is daily repeated in hovels as well as in high houses.

Nature is the best posture-master. An awkward man is graceful when asleep, or when hard at work, or agreeably amused. The attitudes of children are gentle, persuasive, royal, in their games and in their house-talk and in the street, before they have learned to cringe. 'Tis impossible but thought disposes the limbs and the walk, and is masterly or secondary. No art can contravene it or conceal it. Give me a thought, and my hands and legs and voice and face will all go right. And we are awkward for want of thought. The inspiration is scanty, and does not arrive at the extremities.

It is a commonplace of romances to show the ungainly manners of the pedant who has lived too long in college. Intellectual men pass for vulgar, and are timid and heavy with the elegant. But if the elegant are also intellectual, instantly the hesitating scholar is inspired, transformed, and exhibits the best style of manners. An intellectual man, though of feeble spirit, is instantly reinforced by being put into the company of scholars, and, to the surprise of everybody, becomes a lawgiver. We think a man unable and desponding. It is only that he is misplaced. Put him with new companions, and they will find in him excellent qualities, unsuspected accomplishments, and the joy of life. 'Tis a great point in a gallery, how you hang pictures; and not less in society, how you seat your party. The circumstance of circumstance is timing and placing. When a man meets his accurate mate, society begins, and life is delicious.

What happiness they give—what ties they form! While one man by his

manners pins me to the wall, with another I walk among the stars. One man can, by his voice, lead the cheer of a regiment; another will have no following. Nature made us all intelligent of these signs for our safety and our happiness. While certain faces are illumined with intelligence, decorated with invitation, others are marked with warnings: certain voices are hoarse and truculent; sometimes they even bark. There is the same difference between heavy and genial manners as between the perceptions of octogenarians and those of young girls who see everything in the twinkling of an eye.

Manners are the revealers of secrets, the betrayers of any disproportion or want of symmetry in mind and character. It is the law of our constitution that every change in our experience instantly indicates itself on our countenance and carriage, as the lapse of time tells itself on the face of a clock. We may be too obtuse to read it, but the record is there. Some men may be obtuse to read it, but some men are not obtuse and do read it. In Borrow's *Lavengro* the gipsy instantly detects, by his companion's face and behaviour, that some good fortune has befallen him, and that he has money. We say, in these days, that credit is to be abolished in trade. Is it? When a stranger comes to buy goods of you, do you not look in his face and answer according to what you read there? Credit is to be abolished? Can't you abolish faces and character, of which credit is the reflection? As long as men are born babes they will live on credit for the first fourteen or eighteen years of their life. Every innocent man has in his countenance a promise to pay, and hence credit. Less credit will there be? You are mistaken. There will always be more and more. Character *must* be trusted; and just in proportion to the morality of a people will be the expansion of the credit system.

There is even a little rule of prudence for the young experimenter which Dr. Franklin omitted to set down, yet which the youth may find useful: Do not go to ask your debtor the payment of a debt on the day when you have no other resource. He will learn by your air and tone how it is with you, and will treat you as a beggar. But work and starve a little longer. Wait till your affairs go better and you have other means at hand; you will then ask in a different tone, and he will treat your claim with entire respect.

Now, we all wish to be graceful, and do justice to ourselves by our manners; but youth in America is wont to be poor and hurried, not at ease, or not in society where high behaviour could be taught. But the sentiment of honour and the wish to serve make all our pains superfluous. Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy. Self-command is the main elegance. "Keep cool, and you command everybody," said St. Just; and the wily old Talleyrand would still say, *Surtout, messieurs, pas de zèle*—"Above all, gentlemen, no heat."

Why have you statues in your hall but to teach you that, when the doorbell rings, you shall sit like them? "Eat at your table as you would eat at the table of the king," said Confucius. It is an excellent custom of the Quakers, if only for a school of manners—the silent prayer before meals. It has the effect to stop mirth, and introduce a moment of reflection. After the pause, all resume their usual intercourse from a vantage-ground. What a check to the violent manners which sometimes come to the table—of wrath, and whining, and heat in trifles!

'Tis a rule of manners to avoid exaggeration. A lady loses as soon as she admires too easily and too much. In man or woman the face and the person lose power when they are on the strain to express admiration. A man makes his inferiors his superiors by heat. Why need you, who are not a gossip, talk as a gossip, and tell eagerly what the neighbours or the journals say? State your

opinion without apology. The attitude is the main point, assuring your companion that, come good news or come bad, you remain in good heart and good mind, which is the best news you can possibly communicate. Self-control is the rule. You have in you there a noisy, sensual savage, which you are to keep down, and turn all his strength to beauty. For example, what a seneschal and detective is laughter! It seems to require several generations of education to train a squeaking or a shouting habit out of a man. Sometimes, when in almost all expressions the Choctaw and the slave have been worked out of him, a coarse nature still betrays itself in his contemptible squeals of joy. It is necessary for the purification of drawing-rooms that these entertaining explosions should be under strict control. Lord Chesterfield had early made this discovery, for he says: "I am sure that, since I had the use of my reason, no human being has ever heard me laugh." I know that there go two to this game, and, in the presence of certain formidable wits, savage nature must sometimes rush out in some disorder.

To pass to an allied topic, one word or two in regard to dress, in which our civilisation instantly shows itself. No nation is dressed with more good sense than ours. And everybody sees certain moral benefit in it. When the young European emigrant, after a summer's labour, puts on for the first time a new coat, he puts on much more. His good and becoming clothes put him on thinking that he must behave like people who are so dressed; and silently and steadily his behaviour mends. But quite another class of our own youth I should remind, of dress in general, that some people need it and others need it not. Thus a king or a general does not need a fine coat, and a commanding person may save himself all solicitude on that point. There are always slovens in State Street or Wall Street, who are not less considered. If a man have manners and talent, he may dress roughly and carelessly. It is only when mind and character slumber that the dress can be seen. If the intellect were always awake, and every noble sentiment, the man might go in a huckaback or mats, and his dress would be admired and imitated. Remember George Herbert's maxim, "This coat with my discretion will be brave." If, however, a man has not firm nerves and has keen sensibility, it is perhaps a wise economy to go to a good shop and dress himself irreproachably. He can then dismiss all care from his mind, and may easily find that performance an addition of confidence, a fortification that turns the scale in social encounters, and allows him to go gaily into conversations where else he had been dry and embarrassed. I am not ignorant—I have heard with admiring submission the experience of the lady who declared that "the sense of being perfectly well-dressed gives a feeling of inward tranquillity which religion is powerless to bestow."

Thus much for manners; but we are not content with pantomime; we say, This is only for the eyes. We want real relations of the mind and the heart; we want friendship; we want knowledge; we want virtue; a more inward existence to read the history of each other. Welfare requires one or two companions of intelligence, probity, and grace, to wear out life with—persons with whom we can speak a few reasonable words every day, by whom we can measure ourselves, and who shall hold us fast to good sense and virtue; and these we are always in search of. He must be inestimable to us to whom we can say what we cannot say to ourselves. Yet now and then we say things to our mates, or hear things from them, which seem to put it out of the power of the parties to be strangers again. "Either death or a friend" is a Persian proverb. I suppose I give the experience of many when I give my own. A few times in my life it has happened to me to meet persons of so good a nature and so good breeding that every topic was open and discussed without possibility of offence—persons who could

not be shocked. One of my friends said, in speaking of certain associates: "There is not one of them but I can offend at any moment." But to the company I am now considering were no terrors, no vulgarity. All topics were broached—life, love, marriage, sex, hatred, suicide, magic, theism, art, poetry, religion, myself, thyself, all selves, and whatever else, with a security and vivacity which belonged to the nobility of the parties and to their brave truth. The life of these persons was conducted in the same calm and affirmative manner as their discourse. Life with them was an experiment continually varied, full of results, full of grandeur, and by no means the hot and hurried business which passes in the world. The delight in good company, in pure, brilliant, social atmosphere; the incomparable satisfaction of a society in which everything can be safely said, in which every member returns a true echo, in which a wise freedom, an ideal republic of sense, simplicity, knowledge, and thorough good-meaning abide—doubles the value of life. It is this that justifies to each the jealousy with which the doors are kept. Do not look sourly at the set or the club which does not choose you. Every highly-organised person knows the value of the social barriers, since the best society has often been spoiled to him by the intrusion of bad companions. He of all men would keep the right of choice sacred, and feel that the exclusions are in the interest of the admissions, though they happen at this moment to thwart his wishes.

The hunger for company is keen, but it must be discriminating, and must be economised. 'Tis a defect in our manners that they have not yet reached the prescribing a limit to visits. That every well-dressed lady or gentleman should be at liberty to exceed ten minutes in his or her call on serious people shows a civilisation still rude. A universal etiquette should fix an iron limit after which a moment should not be allowed without explicit leave granted on request of either the giver or receiver of the visit. There is inconvenience in such strictness, but vast inconvenience in the want of it. To trespass on a public servant is to trespass on a nation's time. Yet Presidents of the United States are afflicted by rude Western and Southern gossips (I hope it is only by them) until the gossip's immeasurable legs are tired of sitting; then he strides out, and the nation is relieved.

It is very certain that sincere and happy conversation doubles our powers; that in the effort to unfold our thought to a friend we make it clearer to ourselves, and surround it with illustrations that help and delight us. It may happen that each hears from the other a better wisdom than anyone else will ever hear from either. But these ties are taken care of by Providence to each of us. A wise man once said to me that "all whom he knew met"—meaning that he need not take pains to introduce the persons whom he valued to each other: they were sure to be drawn together as by gravitation. The soul of a man must be the servant of another. The true friend must have an attraction to whatever virtue is in us. Our chief want in life—is it not somebody who can make us do what we can? And we are easily great with the loved and honoured associate. We come out of our egg-shell existence and see the great dome arching over us; see the zenith above and the nadir under us. Speech is power; speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel. It is to bring another out of his bad sense into your good sense. You are to be missionary and carrier of all that is good and noble. Virtues speak to virtues, vices to vices—each to their own kind in the people with whom we deal. If you are suspiciously and dryly on your guard, so is he or she. If you rise to frankness and generosity, they will respect it now or later.

In this art of conversation, Woman, if not the queen and victor, is the lawgiver. If every one recalled his experiences, he might find the best in the speech of

superior women; which was better than song, and carried ingenuity, character, wise counsel, and affection as easily as the wit with which it was adorned. They are not only wise themselves; they make us wise. No one can be a master in conversation who has not learned much from women; their presence and inspiration are essential to its success. Steele said of his mistress, that "to have loved her was a liberal education." Shenstone gave no bad account of this influence in his description of the French woman: "There is a quality in which no woman in the world can compete with her—it is the power of intellectual irritation. She will draw wit out of a fool. She strikes with such address the chords of self-love that she gives unexpected vigour and agility to fancy, and electrifies a body that appeared non-electric." Coleridge esteems cultivated women as the depositaries and guardians of "English undefiled"; and Luther commends that accomplishment of "pure German speech" of his wife.

Madame de Staël, by the unanimous consent of all who knew her, was the most extraordinary converser that was known in her time, and it was a time full of eminent men and women; she knew all distinguished persons in letters or society in England, Germany, and Italy, as well as in France; though she said, with characteristic nationality: "Conversation, like talent, exists only in France." Madame de Staël valued nothing but conversation. When they showed her the beautiful Lake Leman, she exclaimed, "O for the gutter of the Rue de Bac!" the street in Paris in which her house stood. And she said one day, seriously, to M. Molé: "If it were not for respect to human opinions, I would not open my window to see the Bay of Naples for the first time, while I would go five hundred leagues to talk with a man of genius whom I had not seen." Sainte-Beuve tells us of the privileged circle at Coppet, that after making an excursion one day the party returned in two coaches from Chambéry to Aix, on the way to Coppet. The first coach had many rueful accidents to relate, a terrific thunderstorm, shocking roads, and danger and gloom to the whole company. The party in the second coach, on arriving, heard this story with surprise—of thunderstorm, of steeps, of mud, of danger, they knew nothing; no, they had forgotten earth, and breathed a purer air—such a conversation between Madame de Staël and Madame Récamier, and Benjamin Constant and Schlegel! they were all in a state of delight. The intoxication of the conversation had made them insensible to all notice of weather or rough roads. Madame de Tessé said: "If I were Queen, I should command Madame de Staël to talk to me every day." Conversation fills all gaps, supplies all deficiencies. What a good trait is that recorded of Madame de Maintenon, that during dinner the servant slipped to her side: "Please, madame, one anecdote more, for there is no roast to-day."

Politics, war, party, luxury, avarice, fashion, are all asses with loaded panniers to serve the kitchen of Intellect, the king. There is nothing that does not pass into lever or weapon.

And yet there are trails enough of nerve and character, brave choices enough of taking the part of truth and of the oppressed against the oppressor, in privatest circles. A right speech is not well to be distinguished from action. Courage to ask questions; courage to expose our ignorance. The great gain is, not to shine, not to conquer your companion—then you learn nothing but conceit—but to find a companion who knows what you do not; to tilt with him and be overthrown, horse and foot, with utter destruction of all your logic and learning. There is a defeat that is useful. Then you can see the real and the counterfeit, and will never accept the counterfeit again. You will adopt the art of war that has defeated you. You will ride to battle horsed on the very logic which you found irresistible. You will accept the fertile truth, instead of the solemn customary lie.

Let nature bear the expense. The attitude, the tone, is all. Let our eyes not look away, but meet. Let us not look east and west for materials of conversation, but rest in presence and unity. A just feeling will fast enough supply fuel for discourse, if speaking be more grateful than silence. When people come to see us, we foolishly prattle, lest we be inhospitable. But things said for conversation are chalk eggs. Don't *say* things. What you *are* stands over you the while, and thunders so that I cannot hear what you say to the contrary. A lady of my acquaintance said: "I don't care so much for what they say as I do for what makes them say it."

The main point is to throw yourself on the truth, and say, with Newton: "There's no contending against facts." When Molyneux fancied that the observations of the nutation of the earth's axis destroyed Newton's theory of gravitation, he tried to break it softly to Sir Isaac, who only answered: "It may be so; there's no arguing against facts and experiments."

But there are people who cannot be cultivated — people on whom speech makes no impression; swainish, morose people, who must be kept down and quieted as you would those who are a little tipsy; others, who are not only swainish, but are prompt to take oath that swainishness is the only culture; and, though their odd wit may have some salt for you, your friends would not relish it. Bolt these out. And I have seen a man of genius who made me think that if other men were like him co-operation were impossible. Must we always talk for victory, and never once for truth, for comfort, and joy? Here is centrality and penetration, strong understanding, and the higher gifts, the insight of the real, or from the real, and the moral rectitude which belongs to it; but all this and all his resources of wit and invention are lost to me in every experiment that I make to hold intercourse with his mind; always some weary, captious paradox to fight you with, and the time and temper wasted. And beware of jokes; too much temperance cannot be used: inestimable for sauce, but corrupting for food, we go away hollow and ashamed. As soon as the company give in to this enjoyment, we shall have no Olympus. True wit never made us laugh. Mohammed seems to have borrowed by anticipation of several centuries a leaf from the mind of Swedenborg, when he wrote in the Koran: "On the day of resurrection those who have indulged in ridicule will be called to the door of Paradise, and have it shut in their faces when they reach it. Again, on their turning back, they will be called to another door, and again, on reaching it, will see it closed against them; and so on, *ad infinitum*, without end."

Shun the negative side. Never worry people with your contritions, nor with dismal views of politics or society. Never name sickness: even if you could trust yourself on that perilous topic, beware of unmuzzling a valetudinarian, who will soon give you your fill of it.

The law of the table is Beauty — a respect to the common soul of all the guests. Everything is unseasonable which is private to two or three or any portion of the company. Tact never violates for a moment this law; never intrudes the orders of the house, the vices of the absent, or a tariff of expenses, or professional privacies; as we say, we never "talk shop" before company. Lovers abstain from caresses and haters from insults while they sit in one parlour with common friends.

Stay at home in your mind. Don't recite other people's opinions. See how it lies there in you; and if there is no counsel, offer none. What we want is not your activity or interference with your mind, but your content to be a vehicle of the simple truth. The way to have large occasional views, as in a political or social crisis, is to have large habitual views. When men consult you, it is not that they wish you to stand tiptoe and pump your brains, but to apply

your habitual view, your wisdom, to the present question, forbearing all pedantries and the very name of argument; for in good conversation parties don't speak to the words, but to the meanings of each other.

Manners first, then conversation. Later, we see that, as life was not in manners, so it is not in talk. Manners are external; talk is occasional; these require certain material conditions, human labour for food, clothes, house, tools, and, in short, plenty and ease—since only so can certain finer and finest powers appear and expand. In a whole nation of Hottentots there shall not be one valuable man—valuable out of his tribe. In every million of Europeans or of Americans there shall be thousands who would be valuable on any spot on the globe.

The consideration the rich possess in all societies is not without meaning or right. It is the approval given by the human understanding to the act of creating value by knowledge and labour. It is the sense of every human being that man should have this dominion of nature, should arm himself with tools and force the elements to drudge for him and give him power. Every one must seek to secure his independence; but he need not be rich. The old Confucius in China admitted the benefit, but stated the limitation: "If the search for riches were sure to be successful, though I should become a groom with whip in hand to get them, I will do so. As the search may not be successful, I will follow after that which I love." There is in America a general conviction in the minds of all mature men that every young man of good faculty and good habits can by perseverance attain to an adequate estate: if he have a turn for business, and a quick eye for the opportunities which are always offering for investment, he can come to wealth, and in such good season as to enjoy as well as transmit it.

Every human society wants to be officered by a best class, who shall be masters instructed in all the great arts of life; shall be wise, temperate, brave, public men, adorned with dignity and accomplishments. Every country wishes this, and each has taken its own method to secure such service to the State. In Europe, ancient and modern, it has been attempted to secure the existence of a superior class by hereditary nobility, with estates transmitted by primogeniture and entail. But in the last age this system has been on its trial, and the verdict of mankind is pretty nearly pronounced. That method secured permanence of families, firmness of customs, a certain external culture and good taste; gratified the ear with preserving historic names; but the heroic father did not surely have heroic sons, and still less surely heroic grandsons: wealth and ease corrupted the race.

In America the necessity of clearing the forest, laying out town and street, and building every house and barn and fence, then church and town-house, exhausted such means as the Pilgrims brought, and made the whole population poor; and the like necessity is still found in each new settlement in the Territories. These needs gave their character to the public debates in every village and State. I have been often impressed at our country town-meetings with the accumulated virility, in each village, of five or six or eight or ten men, who speak so well, and so easily handle the affairs of the town. I often hear the business of a little town (with which I am most familiar) discussed with a clearness and thoroughness, and with a generosity too, that would have satisfied me had it been one of the larger capitals. I am sure each one of my readers has a parallel experience. And every one knows that in every town or city is always to be found a certain number of public-spirited men who perform, unpaid, a great amount of hard work in the interest of the Churches, of schools, of public grounds, works of taste and refinement. And as in civil duties, so in social power and duties. Our gentlemen of the old school—that is, of the school of Washington, Adams, and Hamilton—were bred after English types,

and that style of breeding furnished fine examples in the last generation; but, though some of us have seen such, I doubt they are all gone. But nature is not poorer to-day. With all our haste, and slipshod ways, and flippant self-assertion, I have seen examples of new grace and power in address that honour the country. It was my fortune, not long ago, with my eyes directed on this subject, to fall in with an American to be proud of. I said never was such force, good meaning, good sense, good action, combined with such domestic lovely behaviour, such modesty and persistent preference for others. Wherever he moved he was the benefactor. It is of course that he should ride well, shoot well, sail well, keep house well, administer affairs well; but he was the best talker, also, in the company: what with a perpetual practical wisdom, with an eye always to the working of the thing, what with the multitude and distinction of his facts (and one detected continually that he had a hand in everything that has been done), and in the temperance with which he parried all offence and opened the eyes of the person he talked with without contradicting him. Yet I said to myself, How little this man suspects, with his sympathy for men and his respect for lettered and scientific people, that he is not likely, in any company, to meet a man superior to himself. And I think this is a good country that can bear such a creature as he is.

The young men in America at this moment take little thought of what men in England are thinking or doing. That is the point which decides the welfare of a people: *which way does it look?* If to any other people, it is not well with them. If occupied in its own affairs and thoughts and men, with a heat which excludes almost the notice of any other people—as the Jews, the Greeks, the Persians, the Romans, the Arabians, the French, the English, at their best times have been—they are sublime; and we know that in this abstraction they are executing excellent work. Amid the calamities which war has brought on our country this one benefit has accrued—that our eyes are withdrawn from England, withdrawn from France, and look homeward. We have come to feel that "by ourselves our safety must be bought"; to know the vast resources of the continent, the goodwill that is in the people, their conviction of the great moral advantages of freedom, social equality, education, and religious culture, and their determination to hold these fast, and, by them, to hold fast the country and penetrate every square mile of it with this American civilisation.

The consolation and happy moment of life, atoning for all shortcomings, is sentiment; a flame of affection or delight in the heart, burning up suddenly for its objects; as the love of the mother for her child; of the child for its mate; of the youth for his friend; of the scholar for his pursuit; of the boy for sea life, or for painting, or in the passion for his country; or in the tender-hearted philanthropist to spend and be spent for some romantic charity, as Howard for the prisoner, or John Brown for the slave. No matter what the object is, so it be good, this flame of desire makes life sweet and tolerable. It reinforces the heart that feels it, makes all its acts and words gracious and interesting. Now, society in towns is infested by persons who, seeing that the sentiments please, counterfeit the expression of them. These we call sentimentalists—talkers who mistake the description for the thing, saying for having. They have, they tell you, an intense love of nature; poetry—O, they adore poetry—and roses, and the moon, and the cavalry regiment, and the governor; they love liberty, "dear liberty!" they worship virtue, "dear virtue!" Yes, they adopt whatever merit is in good repute, and almost make it hateful with their praise. The warmer their expressions, the colder we feel; we shiver with cold. A little experience acquaints us with the unconvertibility of the sentimentalist, the soul that is lost by mimicking soul. Cure the

drunkard, heal the insane, mollify the homicide, civilise the Pawnee, but what lessons can be devised for the debauchee of sentiment? Was ever one converted? The innocence and ignorance of the patient is the first difficulty; he believes his disease is blooming health. A rough realist or a phalanx of realists would be prescribed; but that is like proposing to mend your bad road with diamonds. Then poverty, famine, war, imprisonment, might be tried. Another cure would be to fight fire with fire, to match a sentimentalist with a sentimentalist. I think each might begin to suspect that something was wrong.

Would we codify the laws that should reign in households, and whose daily transgression annoys and mortifies us and degrades our household life, we must learn to adorn every day with sacrifices. Good manners are made up of petty sacrifices. Temperance, courage, love, are made up of the same jewels. Listen to every prompting of honour. "As soon as sacrifice becomes a duty and necessity to the man, I see no limit to the horizon which opens before me."[1]

Of course, those people, and no others, interest us who believe in their thought, who are absorbed, if you please to say so, in their own dream. They only can give the key and leading to better society: those who delight in each other only because both delight in the eternal laws; who forgive nothing to each other; who, by their joy and homage to these, are made incapable of conceit, which destroys almost all the fine wits. Any other affection between men than this geometric one of relation to the same thing is a mere mush of materialism.

These are the bases of civil and polite society—namely, manners, conversation, lucrative labour, and public action, whether political or in the leading of social institutions. We have much to regret, much to mend, in our society; but I believe that with all liberal and hopeful men there is a firm faith in the beneficent results which we really enjoy; that intelligence, manly enterprise, good education, virtuous life, and elegant manners have been and are found here, and, we hope, in the next generation will still more abound.

# USES OF GREAT MEN

It is natural to believe in great men. If the companions of our childhood should turn out to be heroes and their condition regal, it would not surprise us. All mythology opens with demigods, and the circumstance is high and poetic; that is, their genius is paramount. In the legends of the Gautama the first men ate the earth, and found it deliciously sweet.

Nature seems to exist for the excellent. The world is upheld by the veracity of good men; they make the earth wholesome. They who lived with them found life glad and nutritious. Life is sweet and tolerable only in our belief in such society; and, actually or ideally, we manage to live with superiors. We call our children and our lands by their names. Their names are wrought into the verbs of language, their works and effigies are in our houses, and every circumstance of the day recalls an anecdote of them.

The search after the great man is the

Ernest Renan.

dream of youth and the most serious occupation of manhood. We travel into foreign parts to find his works—if possible, to get a glimpse of him. But we are put off with fortune instead. You say, the English are practical; the Germans are hospitable; in Valencia the climate is delicious; and in the hills of the Sacramento there is gold for the gathering. Yes; but I do not travel to find comfortable, rich, and hospitable people, or clear sky, or ingots that cost too much. But if there were any magnet that would point to the countries and houses where are the persons who are intrinsically rich and powerful, I would sell all and buy it, and put myself on the road to-day.

The race goes with us on their credit. The knowledge that in the city is a man who invented the railroad raises the credit of all the citizens. But enormous populations, if they be beggars, are disgusting, like moving cheese, like hills of ants or of fleas—the more, the worse.

Our religion is the love and cherishing of these patrons. The gods of fable are the shining moments of great men. We run all our vessels into one mould. Our colossal theologies of Judaism, Christism, Buddhism, Mohammedism, are the necessary and structural action of the human mind. The student of history is like a man going into a warehouse to buy cloths or carpets. He fancies he has a new article. If he go to the factory, he shall find that his new stuff still repeats the scrolls and rosettes which are found on the interior walls of the pyramids of Thebes. Our theism is the purification of the human mind. Man can paint, or make, or think, nothing but man. He believes that the great material elements had their origin from his thought. And our philosophy finds one essence collected or distributed.

If, now, we proceed to inquire into the kinds of service we derive from others, let us be warned of the danger of modern studies, and begin low enough. We must not contend against love, or deny the substantial existence of other people. I know not what would happen to us. We have social strengths. Our affection towards others creates a sort of vantage or purchase which nothing will supply. I can do that by another which I cannot do alone. I can say to you what I cannot first say to myself. Other men are lenses through which we read our own minds. Each man seeks those of different quality from his own, and such as are good of their kind; that is, he seeks other men, and the *otherest*. The stronger the nature, the more it is reactive. Let us have the quality pure. A little genius let us leave alone. A main difference betwixt men is whether they attend their own affair or not. Man is that noble endogenous plant which grows, like the palm, from within outward. His own affair, though impossible to others, he can open with celerity and in sport. It is easy to sugar to be sweet, and to nitre to be salt. We take a great deal of pains to waylay and entrap that which of itself will fall into our hands. I count him a great man who inhabits a higher sphere of thought, into which other men rise with labour and difficulty; he has but to open his eyes to see things in a true light and in large relations, while they must make painful corrections and keep a vigilant eye on many sources of error. His service to us is of like sort. It costs a beautiful person no exertion to paint her image on our eyes; yet how splendid is that benefit! It costs no more for a wise soul to convey his quality to other men. And everyone can do his best thing easiest. "*Peu de moyens, beaucoup d'effét.*" He is great who is what he is from nature, and who never reminds us of others.

But he must be related to us, and our life receive from him some promise of explanation. I cannot tell what I would know; but I have observed there are persons who, in their character and actions, answer questions which I have not skill to put. One man answers some question which none of his contemporaries put, and is isolated. The past

and passing religions and philosophies answer some other question. Certain men affect us as rich possibilities, but helpless to themselves and to their times —the sport perhaps of some instinct that rules in the air; they do not speak to our want. But the great are near; we know them at sight. They satisfy expectation and fall into place. What is good is effective, generative; makes for itself room, food, and allies. A sound apple produces seed—a hybrid does not. Is a man in his place, he is constructive, fertile, magnetic, inundating armies with his purpose, which is thus executed. The river makes its own shores, and each legitimate idea makes its own channels and welcome—harvests for food, institutions for expression, weapons to fight with, and disciples to explain it. The true artist has the planet for his pedestal; the adventurer, after years of strife, has nothing broader than his own shoes.

Our common discourse respects two kinds of use or service from superior men. Direct giving is agreeable to the early belief of men; direct giving of material or metaphysical aid, as of health, eternal youth, fine senses, arts of healing, magical power, and prophecy. The boy believes there is a teacher who can sell him wisdom. Churches believe in imputed merit. But, in strictness, we are not much cognisant of direct serving. Man is endogenous, and education is his unfolding. The aid we have from others is mechanical compared with the discoveries of nature in us. What is thus learned is delightful in the doing, and the effect remains. Right ethics are central, and go from the soul outward. Gift is contrary to the law of the universe. Serving others is serving us. I must absolve me to myself. "Mind thy affair," says the spirit —"coxcomb, would you meddle with the skies, or with other people?" Indirect service is left. Men have a pictorial or representative quality, and serve us in the intellect. Behmen and Swedenborg saw that things were representative. Men are also representative; first of things, and secondly of ideas.

As plants convert the minerals into food for animals, so each man converts some raw material in nature to human use. The inventors of fire, electricity, magnetism, iron, lead, glass, linen, silk, cotton; the makers of tools; the inventor of decimal notation; the geometer; the engineer; the musician—severally make an easy way for all, through unknown and impossible confusions. Each man is by secret liking connected with some district of nature, whose agent and interpreter he is—as Linnæus, of plants; Huber, of bees; Fries, of lichens; Van Mons, of pears; Dalton, of atomic forms; Euclid, of lines; Newton, of fluxions.

A man is a centre for nature, running out threads of relation through everything, fluid and solid, material and elemental. The earth rolls; every clod and stone comes to the meridian: so every organ, function, acid, crystal, grain of dust, has its relation to the brain. It waits long, but its turn comes. Each plant has its parasite, and each created thing its lover and poet. Justice has already been done to steam, to iron, to wood, to coal, to loadstone, to iodine, to corn and cotton; but how few materials are yet used by our arts! The mass of creatures and of qualities are still hid and expectant. It would seem as if each waited, like the enchanted princess in fairy tales, for a destined human deliverer. Each must be disenchanted and walk forth to the day in human shape. In the history of discovery, the ripe and latent truth seems to have fashioned a brain for itself. A magnet must be made man in some Gilbert, or Swedenborg, or Oersted, before the general mind can come to entertain its powers.

If we limit ourselves to the first advantages, a sober grace adheres to the mineral and botanic kingdoms, which, in the highest moments, comes up as the charm of nature—the glitter of the spar, the sureness of affinity, the

veracity of angles. Light and darkness, heat and cold, hunger and food, sweet and sour, solid, liquid and gas, circle us round in a wreath of pleasures, and, by their agreeable quarrel, beguile the day of life. The eye repeats every day the first eulogy on things—"He saw that they were good." We know where to find them; and these performers are relished all the more, after a little experience of the pretending races. We are entitled also to higher advantages. Something is wanting to science until it has been humanised. The table of logarithms is one thing, and its vital play in botany, music, optics, and architecture another. There are advancements to numbers, anatomy, architecture, astronomy, little suspected at first, when, by union with intellect and will, they ascend into the life and reappear in conversation, character, and politics.

But this comes later. We speak now only of our acquaintance with them in their own sphere and the way in which they seem to fascinate and draw to them some genius who occupies himself with one thing, all his life long. The possibility of interpretation lies in the identity of the observer with the observed. Each material thing has its celestial side; has its translation, through humanity, into the spiritual and necessary sphere where it plays a part as indestructible as any other. And to these, their ends, all things continually ascend. The gases gather to the solid firmament: the chemic lump arrives at the plant, and grows; arrives at the quadruped, and walks; arrives at the man, and thinks. But also the constituency determines the vote of the representative. He is not only representative, but participant. Like can only be known by like. The reason why he knows about them is that he is of them; he has just come out of nature, or from being a part of that thing. Animated chlorine knows of chlorine, and incarnate zinc of zinc. Their quality makes his career; and he can variously publish their virtues, because they compose him. Man, made of the dust of the world, does not forget his origin; and all that is yet inanimate will one day speak and reason. Unpublished nature will have its whole secret told. Shall we say that quartz mountains will pulverise into innumerable Werners, Von Buchs, and Beaumonts, and the laboratory of the atmosphere holds in solution I know not what Berzeliuses and Davys?

Thus we sit by the fire and take hold on the poles of the earth. This *quasi* omnipresence supplies the imbecility of our condition. In one of those celestial days when heaven and earth meet and adorn each other, it seems a poverty that we can only spend it once: we wish for a thousand heads, a thousand bodies, that we might celebrate its immense beauty in many ways and places. Is this fancy? Well, in good faith, we are multiplied by our proxies. How easily we adopt their labours! Every ship that comes to America got its chart from Columbus. Every novel is a debtor to Homer. Every carpenter who shaves with a fore-plane borrows the genius of a forgotten inventor. Life is girt all round with a zodiac of sciences, the contributions of men who have perished to add their point of light to our sky. Engineer, broker, jurist, physician, moralist, theologian, and every man, inasmuch as he has any science, is a definer and map-maker of the latitudes and longitudes of our condition. These road-makers on every hand enrich us. We must extend the area of life and multiply our relations. We are as much gainers by finding a new property in the old earth as by acquiring a new planet.

We are too passive in the reception of these material or semi-material aids. We must not be sacks and stomachs. To ascend one step—we are better served through our sympathy. Activity is contagious. Looking where others look, and conversing with the same things, we catch the charm which lured them. Napoleon said: "You must not fight too often with one enemy, or you will teach him all your art of war." Talk much with any man of vigorous mind, and we

acquire very fast the habit of looking at things in the same light, and on each occurrence we anticipate his thought.

Men are helpful through the intellect and the affections. Other help I find a false appearance. If you affect to give me bread and fire, I perceive that I pay for it the full price, and at last it leaves me as it found me, neither better nor worse; but all mental and moral force is a positive good. It goes out from you, whether you will or not, and profits me whom you never thought of. I cannot even hear of personal vigour of any kind, great power of performance, without fresh resolution. We are emulous of all that man can do. Cecil's saying of Sir Walter Raleigh, "I know that he can toil terribly," is an electric touch. So are Clarendon's portraits—of Hampden, "who was of an industry and vigilance not to be tired out or wearied by the most laborious, and of parts not to be imposed on by the most subtle and sharp, and of a personal courage equal to his best parts"; of Falkland, "who was so severe an adorer of truth that he could as easily have given himself leave to steal as to dissemble." We cannot read Plutarch without a tingling of the blood; and I accept the saying of the Chinese Mencius: "A sage is the instructor of a hundred ages. When the manners of Loo are heard of, the stupid become intelligent and the wavering determined."

This is the moral of biography; yet it is hard for departed men to touch the quick like our own companions, whose names may not last as long. What is he whom I never think of? While in every solitude are those who succour our genius and stimulate us in wonderful manners. There is a power in love to divine another's destiny better than that other can, and, by heroic encouragements, hold him to his task. What has friendship so signal as its sublime attraction to whatever virtue is in us? We will never more think cheaply of ourselves, or of life. We are piqued to some purpose, and the industry of the diggers on the railroad will not again shame us.

Under this head, too, falls that homage, very pure as I think, which all ranks pay to the hero of the day, from Coriolanus and Gracchus down to Pitt, Lafayette, Wellington, Webster, Lamartine. Hear the shouts in the street! The people cannot see him enough. They delight in a man. Here is a head and a trunk! What a front! What eyes! Atlantean shoulders, and the whole carriage heroic, with equal inward force to guide the great machine! This pleasure of full expression to that which, in their private experience, is usually cramped and obstructed, runs also much higher, and is the secret of the reader's joy in literary genius. Nothing is kept back. There is fire enough to fuse the mountain of ore. Shakespeare's principal merit may be conveyed in saying that he of all men best understands the English language, and can say what he will. Yet these unchoked channels and floodgates of expression are only health or fortunate constitution. Shakespeare's name suggests other and purely intellectual benefits.

Senates and sovereigns have no compliment, with their medals, swords, and armorial coats, like the addressing to a human being thoughts out of a certain height, and presupposing his intelligence. This honour, which is possible in personal intercourse scarcely twice in a lifetime, genius perpetually pays; contented if now and then in a century the proffer is accepted. The indicators of the values of matter are degraded to a sort of cooks and confectioners on the appearance of the indicators of ideas. Genius is the naturalist or geographer of the supersensible regions, and draws their map; and, by acquainting us with new fields of activity, cools our affection for the old. These are at once accepted as the reality, of which the world we have conversed with is the show.

We go to the gymnasium and the swimming-school to see the power and beauty of the body; there is the like pleasure and a higher benefit from witnessing intellectual feats of all kinds; as feats of memory, of mathematical

combination, great power of abstraction, the transmutings of the imagination, even versatility and concentration—as these acts expose the invisible organs and members of the mind, which respond, member for member, to the parts of the body. For we thus enter a new gymnasium, and learn to choose men by their truest marks, taught, with Plato, "to choose those who can, without aid from the eyes or any other sense, proceed to truth and to being." Foremost among these activities are the somersaults, spells, and resurrections wrought by the imagination. When this wakes, a man seems to multiply ten times or a thousand times his force. It opens the delicious sense of indeterminate size, and inspires an audacious mental habit. We are as elastic as the gas of gunpowder, and a sentence in a book, or a word dropped in conversation, sets free our fancy, and instantly our heads are bathed with galaxies, and our feet tread the floor of the Pit. And this benefit is real because we are entitled to these enlargements, and, once having passed the bounds, shall never again be quite the miserable pedants we were.

The high functions of the intellect are so allied that some imaginative power usually appears in all eminent minds, even in arithmeticians of the first class, but especially in meditative men of an intuitive habit of thought. This class serve us, so that they have the perception of identity and the perception of reaction. The eyes of Plato, Shakespeare, Swedenborg, Goethe, never shut on either of these laws. The perception of these laws is a kind of metre of the mind. Little minds are little through failure to see them.

Even these feasts have their surfeit. Our delight in reason degenerates into idolatry of the herald. Especially when a mind of powerful method has instructed men, we find the examples of oppression. The dominion of Aristotle, the Ptolemaic astronomy, the credit of Luther, of Bacon, of Locke; in religion the history of hierarchies, of saints, and the sects which have taken the name of each founder, are in point. Alas! every man is such a victim. The imbecility of men is always inviting the impudence of power. It is the delight of vulgar talent to dazzle and to blind the beholder. But true genius seeks to defend us from itself. True genius will not impoverish, but will liberate, and add new senses. If a wise man should appear in our village, he would create, in those who conversed with him, a new consciousness of wealth, by opening their eyes to unobserved advantage; he would establish a sense of immovable equality, calm us with assurances that we could not be cheated; as every one would discern the checks and guarantees of condition. The rich would see their mistakes and poverty, the poor their escapes and their resources.

But nature brings all this about in due time. Rotation is her remedy. The soul is impatient of masters and eager for change. Housekeepers say of a domestic who has been valuable, "She had lived with me long enough." We are tendencies, or rather symptoms, and none of us complete. We touch and go, and sip the foam of many lives. Rotation is the law of nature. When nature removes a great man, people explore the horizon for a successor; but none comes, and none will. His class is extinguished with him. In some other and quite different field the next man will appear; not Jefferson, not Franklin, but now a great salesman, then a road-contractor, then a student of fishes, then a buffalo-hunting explorer, or a semi-savage Western general. Thus we make a stand against our rougher masters; but against the best there is a finer remedy. The power which they communicate is not theirs. When we are exalted by ideas, we do not owe this to Plato, but to the idea, to which also Plato was debtor.

I must not forget that we have a special debt to a single class. Life is a scale of degrees. Between rank and rank of our great men are wide intervals. Mankind have in all ages attached

themselves to a few persons who, either by the quality of that idea they embodied or by the largeness of their reception, were entitled to the position of leaders and law-givers. These teach us the qualities of primary nature—admit us to the constitution of things. We swim, day by day, on a river of delusions, and are effectually amused with houses and towns in the air, of which the men about us are dupes. But life is a sincerity. In lucid intervals we say: "Let there be an entrance opened for me into realities; I have worn the fool's cap too long." We will know the meaning of our economies and politics. Give us the cipher, and if persons and things are scores of a celestial music, let us read off the strains. We have been cheated of our reason; yet there have been sane men who enjoyed a rich and related existence. What they know, they know for us. With each new mind a new secret of nature transpires; nor can the Bible be closed until the last great man is born. These men correct the delirium of the animal spirits, make us considerate, and engage us to new aims and powers. The veneration of mankind selects these for the highest place. Witness the multitude of statues, pictures, and memorials which recall their genius in every city, village, house, and ship:—

> "Ever their phantoms arise before us,
> Our loftier brothers, but one in blood;
> At bed and table they lord it o'er us
> With looks of beauty and words of good."

How to illustrate the distinctive benefit of ideas, the service rendered by those who introduce moral truths into the general mind?—I am plagued, in all my living, with a perpetual tariff of prices. If I work in my garden and prune an apple-tree, I am well enough entertained, and could continue indefinitely in the like occupation. But it comes to mind that a day is gone, and I have got this precious nothing done. I go to Boston or New York, and run up and down on my affairs; they are sped, but so is the day. I am vexed by the recollection of this price I have paid for a trifling advantage. I remember the *peau d'âne* on which whoso sat should have his desire, but a piece of the skin was gone for every wish. I go to a convention of philanthropists. Do what I can, I cannot keep my eyes off the clock. But if there should appear in the company some gentle soul who knows little of persons or parties, of Carolina or Cuba, but who announces a law that disposes these particulars, and so certifies me of the equity which checkmates every false player, bankrupts every self-seeker, and apprises me of my independence on any conditions of country, or time, or human body, that man liberates me; I forget the clock. I pass out of the sore relation to persons. I am healed of my hurts. I am made immortal by apprehending my possession of incorruptible goods. Here is great competition of rich and poor. We live in a market, where is only so much wheat, or wool, or land; and if I have so much more, every other must have so much less. I seem to have no good without breach of good manners. Nobody is glad in the gladness of another, and our system is one of war, of an injurious superiority. Every child of the Saxon race is educated to wish to be first. It is our system; and a man comes to measure his greatness by the regrets, envies, and hatreds of his competitors. But in these new fields there is room: here are no self-esteems, no exclusions.

I admire great men of all classes, those who stand for facts and for thoughts: I like rough and smooth, "Scourges of God," and "Darlings of the human race." I like the first Cæsar; and Charles V. of Spain; and Charles XII. of Sweden; Richard Plantagenet; and Bonaparte, in France. I applaud a sufficient man, an officer equal to his office; captains, ministers, senators. I like a master standing firm on legs of iron, well-born, rich, handsome, eloquent, loaded with advantages, drawing all men by fascination into tributaries and supporters of his power. Sword and staff, or talents sword-like or staff-like, carry

on the work of the world. But I find him greater when he can abolish himself and all heroes by letting in this element of reason, irrespective of persons, this subtiliser and irresistible upward force, into our thought, destroying individualism; the power so great that the potentate is nothing. Then he is a monarch who gives a constitution to his people; a pontiff who preaches the equality of souls and releases his servants from their barbarous homages; an emperor who can spare his empire.

But I intended to specify, with a little minuteness, two or three points of service. Nature never spares the opium or nepenthe, but, whenever she mars her creature with some deformity or defect, lays her poppies plentifully on the bruise, and the sufferer goes joyfully through life, ignorant of the ruin and incapable of seeing it, though all the world point their finger at it every day. The worthless and offensive members of society, whose existence is a social pest, invariably think themselves the most ill-used people alive, and never get over their astonishment at the ingratitude and selfishness of their contemporaries. Our globe discovers its hidden virtues, not only in heroes and archangels, but in gossips and nurses. Is it not a rare contrivance that lodged the due inertia in every creature, the conserving, resisting energy, the anger at being waked or changed? Altogether independent of the intellectual force in each is the pride of opinion, the security that we are right. Not the feeblest grandame, not a mowing idiot, but uses what spark of perception and faculty is left, to chuckle and triumph in his or her opinion over the absurdities of all the rest. Difference from me is the measure of absurdity. Not one has a misgiving of being wrong. Was it not a bright thought that made things cohere with this bitumen, fastest of cements? But, in the midst of this chuckle of self-gratulation, some figure goes by which Thersites, too, can love and admire. This is he that should marshal us the way we were going. There is no end to his aid. Without Plato we should almost lose our faith in the possibility of a reasonable book. We seem to want but one, but we want one. We love to associate with heroic persons, since our receptivity is unlimited; and, with the great, our thoughts and manners easily become great. We are all wise in capacity, though so few in energy. There needs but one wise man in a company, and all are wise, so rapid is the contagion.

Great men are thus a collyrium to clear our eyes from egotism and enable us to see other people and their works. But there are vices and follies incident to whole populations and ages. Men resemble their contemporaries even more than their progenitors. It is observed in old couples, or in persons who have been housemates for a course of years, that they grow like, and if they should live long enough we should not be able to know them apart. Nature abhors these complaisances, which threaten to melt the world into a lump, and hastens to break up such maudlin agglutinations. The like assimilation goes on between men of one town, of one sect, of one political party; and the ideas of the time are in the air, and infect all who breathe it. Viewed from any high point, this city of New York, yonder city of London, the Western civilisation, would seem a bundle of insanities. We keep each other in countenance, and exasperate by emulation the frenzy of the time. The shield against the stingings of conscience is the universal practice, or our contemporaries. Again, it is very easy to be as wise and good as your companions. We learn of our contemporaries what they know, without effort, and almost through the pores of the skin. We catch it by sympathy, or as a wife arrives at the intellectual and moral elevations of her husband. But we stop where they stop. Very hardly can we take another step. The great, or such as hold of nature and transcend fashions by their fidelity to universal ideas, are saviours from these federal errors, and defend us from our

contemporaries. They are the exceptions which we want, where all grows like. A foreign greatness is the antidote for cabalism.

Thus we feed on genius, and refresh ourselves from too much conversation with our mates, and exult in the depth of nature in that direction in which he leads us. What indemnification is one great man for populations of pigmies! Every mother wishes one son a genius, though all the rest should be mediocre. But a new danger appears in the excess of influence of the great man. His attractions warp us from our place. We have become underlings and intellectual suicides. Ah! yonder in the horizon is our help—other great men, new qualities, counterweights and checks on each other. We cloy of the honey of each peculiar greatness. Every hero becomes a bore at last. Perhaps Voltaire was not bad-hearted, yet he said of the good Jesus, even: "I pray you, let me never hear that man's name again." They cry up the virtues of George Washington—"Damn George Washington!" is the poor Jacobin's whole speech and confutation. But it is human nature's indispensable defence. The centripetence augments the centrifugence. We balance one man with his opposite, and the health of the State depends on the see-saw.

There is, however, a speedy limit to the use of heroes. Every genius is defended from approach by quantities of unavailableness. They are very attractive, and seem at a distance our own; but we are hindered on all sides from approach. The more we are drawn, the more we are repelled. There is something not solid in the good that is done for us. The best discovery the discoverer makes for himself. It has something unreal for his companion until he too has substantiated it. It seems as if the Deity dressed each soul which he sends into nature in certain virtues and powers not communicable to other men, and, sending it to perform one more turn through the circle of beings, wrote "*Not transferable*" and "*Good for this trip only*," on these garments of the soul. There is somewhat deceptive about the intercourse of minds. The boundaries are invisible, but they are never crossed. There is such good will to impart, and such good will to receive, that each threatens to become the other; but the law of individuality collects its secret strength: you are you, and I am I, and so we remain.

For nature wishes everything to remain itself; and while every individual strives to grow and exclude, and to exclude and grow, to the extremities of the universe, and to impose the law of its being on every other creature, Nature steadily aims to protect each against every other. Each is self-defended. Nothing is more marked than the power by which individuals are guarded from individuals in a world where every benefactor becomes so easily a malefactor only by continuation of his activity into places where it is not due; where children seem so much at the mercy of their foolish parents, and where almost all men are too social and interfering. We rightly speak of the guardian angels of children. How superior in their security from infusions of evil persons, from vulgarity and second thought! They shed their own abundant beauty on the objects they behold. Therefore, they are not at the mercy of such poor educators as we adults. If we huff and chide them, they soon come not to mind it and get a self-reliance; and if we indulge them to folly, they learn the limitation elsewhere.

We need not fear excessive influence. A more generous trust is permitted. Serve the great. Stick at no humiliation. Grudge no office thou canst render. Be the limb of their body, the breath of their mouth. Compromise thy egotism. Who cares for that, so thou gain aught wider and nobler? Never mind the taunt of Boswellism; the devotion may easily be greater than the wretched pride which is guarding its own skirts. Be another; not thyself, but a Platonist;

not a soul, but a Christian; not a naturalist, but a Cartesian; not a poet, but a Shakespearean. In vain, the wheels of tendency will not stop, nor will all the forces of inertia, fear, or of love itself, hold thee there. On, and forever onward! The microscope observes a monad or wheel-insect among the infusories circulating in water. Presently a dot appears on the animal, which enlarges to a slit, and it becomes two perfect animals. The ever-proceeding detachment appears not less in all thought and in society. Children think they cannot live without their parents. But, long before they are aware of it, the black dot has appeared and the detachment taken place. Any accident will now reveal to them their independence.

But *great men* :—the word is injurious. Is there caste? Is there fate? What becomes of the promise to virtue? The thoughtful youth laments the superfœtation of nature. "Generous and handsome," he says, "is your Hero; but look at yonder poor Paddy, whose country is his wheelbarrow; look at his whole nation of Paddies." Why are the masses, from the dawn of history down, food for knives and powder? The idea dignifies a few leaders, who have sentiment, opinion, love, self-devotion; and they make war and death sacred; but what for the wretches whom they hire and kill? The cheapness of man is every day's tragedy. It is as real a loss that others should be low as that we should be low; for we must have society.

Is it a reply to these suggestions to say, Society is a Pestalozzian school: all are teachers and pupils in turn? We are equally served by receiving and by imparting. Men who know the same things are not long the best company for each other. But bring to each an intelligent person of another experience, and it is as if you let off water from a lake by cutting a lower basin. It seems a mechanical advantage, and great benefit it is to each speaker, as he can now paint out his thought to himself. We pass very fast, in our personal moods, from dignity to dependence. And if any appear never to assume the chair, but always to stand and serve, it is because we do not see the company in a sufficiently long period for the whole rotation of parts to come about. As to what we call the masses, and common men—there are no common men. All men are at last of a size; and true art is only possible on the conviction that every talent has its apotheosis somewhere. Fair play and an open field and freshest laurels to all who have won them! But heaven reserves an equal scope for every creature. Each is uneasy until he has produced his private ray unto the concave sphere, and beheld his talent also in its last nobility and exaltation.

The heroes of the hour are relatively great; of a faster growth; or they are such in whom, at the moment of success, a quality is ripe which is then in request. Other days will demand other qualities. Some rays escape the common observer, and want a finely adapted eye. Ask the great man if there be none greater. His companions are; and not the less great, but the more, that society cannot see them. Nature never sends a great man into the planet without confiding the secret to another soul.

One gracious fact emerges from these studies—that there is true ascension in our love. The reputations of the nineteenth century will one day be quoted to prove its barbarism. The genius of humanity is the real subject whose biography is written in our annals. We must infer much, and supply many chasms in the record. The history of the universe is symptomatic, and life is mnemonical. No man, in all the procession of famous men, is reason or illumination or that essence we were looking for; but is an exhibition, in some quarter, of new possibilities. Could we one day complete the immense figure which these flagrant points compose! The study of many individuals leads us to an elemental region wherein the individual is lost, or wherein all touch

by their summits. Thought and feeling that break out there cannot be impounded by any fence of personality. This is the key to the power of the greatest men—their spirit diffuses itself. A new quality of mind travels by night and by day, in concentric circles from its origin, and publishes itself by unknown methods: the union of all minds appears intimate; what gets admission to one cannot be kept out of any other; the smallest acquisition of truth or of energy, in any quarter, is so much good to the commonwealth of souls. If the disparities of talent and position vanish when the individuals are seen in the duration which is necessary to complete the career of each, even more swiftly the seeming injustice disappears when we ascend to the central identity of all the individuals, and know that they are made of the substance which ordaineth and doeth.

The genius of humanity is the right point of view of history. The qualities abide; the men who exhibit them have now more, now less, and pass away; the qualities remain on another brow. No experience is more familiar. Once you saw phœnixes: they are gone; the world is not, therefore, disenchanted. The vessels on which you read sacred emblems turn out to be common pottery; but the sense of the pictures is sacred, and you may still read them transferred to the walls of the world. For a time our teachers serve us personally, as metres or milestones of progress. Once they were angels of knowledge, and their figures touched the sky. Then we drew near, saw their means, culture, and limits; and they yielded their place to other geniuses. Happy, if a few names remain so high that we have not been able to read them nearer, and age and comparison have not robbed them of a ray. But at last we shall cease to look in men for completeness, and shall content ourselves with their social and delegated quality. All that respects the individual is temporary and prospective, like the individual himself, who is ascending out of his limits into a catholic existence. We have never come at the true and best benefit of any genius so long as we believe him an original force. In the moment when he ceases to help us as a cause, he begins to help us more as an effect. Then he appears as an exponent of a vaster mind and will. The opaque self becomes transparent with the light of the First Cause.

Yet, within the limits of human education and agency, we may say great men exist that there may be greater men. The destiny of organised nature is amelioration, and who can tell its limits? It is for man to tame the chaos; on every side, while he lives, to scatter the seeds of science and of song, that climate, corn, animals, men, may be milder, and the germs of love and benefit may be multiplied.

# MANNERS

## (English Traits)

I FIND the Englishman to be him of all men who stands firmest in his shoes. The English have in themselves what they value in their horses—mettle and bottom. On the day of my arrival at Liverpool, a gentleman, in describing to me the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, happened to say: "Lord Clarendon has pluck like

a cock, and will fight till he dies"; and what I heard first I heard last, and the one thing the English value is *pluck*. The word is not beautiful, but on the quality they signify by it the nation is unanimous. The cabmen have it; the merchants have it; the bishops have it; the women have it; the journals have it —the *Times* newspaper, they say, is the pluckiest thing in England, and Sydney Smith had made it a proverb that little Lord John Russell, the minister, would take the command of the Channel fleet to-morrow.

They require you to dare to be of your own opinion, and they hate the practical cowards who cannot in affairs answer directly yes or no. They dare to displease—nay, they will let you break all the commandments, if you do it natively and with spirit. You must be somebody; then you may do this or that, as you will.

Machinery has been applied to all work, and carried to such perfection that little is left for the men but to mind the engines and feed the furnaces. But the machines require punctual service, and, as they never tire, they prove too much for their tenders. Mines, forges, mills, breweries, railroads, steam-pump, steam-plough, drill of regiments, drill of police, rule of court and shop-rule, have operated to give a mechanical regularity to all the habit and action of men. A terrible machine has possessed itself of the ground, the air, the men and women, and hardly even thought is free.

The mechanical might and organisation requires in the people constitution and answering spirits; and he who goes among them must have some weight of metal. At last, you take your hint from the fury of life you find, and say, one thing is plain, this is no country for faint-hearted people: don't creep about diffidently; make up your mind; take your own course, and you shall find respect and furtherance.

It requires, men say, a good constitution to travel in Spain. I say as much of England, for other cause, simply on account of the vigour and brawn of the people. Nothing but the most serious business could give one any counterweight to these Baresarks, though they were only to order eggs and muffins for their breakfast. The Englishman speaks with all his body. His elocution is stomachic, as the American's is labial. The Englishman is very petulant and precise about his accommodation at inns and on the roads; a quiddle about his toast and his chop and every species of convenience, and loud and pungent in his expressions of impatience at any neglect. His vivacity betrays itself at all points, in his manners, in his respiration, and the inarticulate noises he makes in clearing the throat; all significant of burly strength. He has stamina; he can take the initiative in emergencies. He has that *aplomb* which results from a good adjustment of the moral and physical nature and the obedience of all the powers to the will; as if the axes of his eyes were united to his backbone, and only moved with the trunk.

This vigour appears in the incuriosity and stony neglect, each of every other. Each man walks, eats, drinks, shaves, dresses, gesticulates, and in every manner acts and suffers without reference to the bystanders, in his own fashion, only careful not to interfere with them or annoy them; not that he is trained to neglect the eyes of his neighbours—he is really occupied with his own affair and does not think of them. Every man in this polished country consults only his convenience, as much as a solitary pioneer in Wisconsin. I know not where any personal eccentricity is so freely allowed, and no man gives himself any concern with it. An Englishman walks in a pouring rain, swinging his closed umbrella like a walking-stick; wears a wig, or a shawl, or a saddle, or stands on his head, and no remark is made. And as he has been doing this for several generations, it is now in the blood.

In short, every one of these islanders is an island himself, safe, tranquil, incommunicable. In a company of

strangers you would think him deaf; his eyes never wander from his table and newspaper. He is never betrayed into any curiosity or unbecoming emotion. They have all been trained in one severe school of manners, and never put off the harness. He does not give his hand. He does not let you meet his eye. It is almost an affront to look a man in the face without being introduced. In mixed or in select companies they do not introduce persons; so that a presentation is a circumstance as valid as a contract. Introductions are sacraments. He withholds his name. At the hotel, he is hardly willing to whisper it to the clerk at the book-office. If he give you his private address on a card, it is like an avowal of friendship; and his bearing, on being introduced, is cold, even though he is seeking your acquaintance and is studying how he shall serve you.

It was an odd proof of this impressive energy that in my lectures I hesitated to read, and threw out for its impertinence, many a disparaging phrase which I had been accustomed to spin, about poor, thin, unable mortals; so much had the fine physique and the personal vigour of this robust race worked on my imagination.

I happened to arrive in England at the moment of a commercial crisis. But it was evident that, let who will fail, England will not. These people have sat here a thousand years, and here will continue to sit. They will not break up, or arrive at any desperate revolution, like their neighbours; for they have as much energy, as much continence of character, as they ever had. The power and possession which surround them are their own creation, and they exert the same commanding industry at this moment.

They are positive, methodical, cleanly, and formal, loving routine and conventional ways; loving truth and religion, to be sure, but inexorable on points of form. All the world praises the comfort and private appointments of an English inn, and of English households. You are sure of neatness and of personal decorum. A Frenchman may possibly be clean; an Englishman is conscientiously clean. A certain order and complete propriety is found in his dress and in his belongings.

Born in a harsh and wet climate, which keeps him indoors whenever he is at rest, and being of an affectionate and loyal temper, he dearly loves his house. If he is rich, he buys a demesne and builds a hall; if he is in middle condition, he spares no expense on his house. Without, it is all planted; within, it is wainscoted, carved, curtained, hung with pictures, and filled with good furniture. 'Tis a passion which survives all others, to deck and improve it. Hither he brings all that is rare and costly, and, with the national tendency to sit fast in the same spot for many generations, it comes to be, in the course of time, a museum of heirlooms, gifts and trophies of the adventures and exploits of the family. He is very fond of silver plate, and, though he have no gallery of portraits of his ancestors, he has of their punch-bowls and porringers. Incredible amounts of plate are found in good houses, and the poorest have some spoon or saucepan, gift of a godmother, saved out of better times.

An English family consists of a few persons, who, from youth to age, are found revolving within a few feet of each other, as if tied by some invisible ligature, tense as that cartilage which we have seen attaching the two Siamese. England produces under favourable conditions of ease and culture the finest women in the world. And as the men are affectionate and true-hearted, the women inspire and refine them. Nothing can be more delicate without being fantastical, nothing more firm and based in nature and sentiment, than the courtship and mutual carriage of the sexes. The song of 1596 says: "The wife of every Englishman is counted blest." The sentiment of Imogen in Cymbeline is copied from English nature; and not less the Portia of Brutus, the Kate Percy and the Desdemona. The romance

does not exceed the height of noble passion in Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson, or in Lady Russell, or even, as one discerns through the plain prose of Pepys's Diary, the sacred habit of an English wife. Sir Samuel Romilly could not bear the death of his wife. Every class has its noble and tender examples.

Domesticity is the tap-root which enables the nation to branch wide and high. The motive and end of their trade and empire is to guard the independence and privacy of their homes. Nothing so much marks their manners as the concentration on their household ties. This domesticity is carried into court and camp. Wellington governed India and Spain and his own troops, and fought battles, like a good family-man, paid his debts, and, though general of an army in Spain, could not stir abroad for fear of public creditors. This taste for house and parish merits has of course its doting and foolish side. Mr. Cobbett attributes the huge popularity of Perceval, Prime Minister in 1810, to the fact that he was wont to go to church every Sunday with a large quarto gilt prayer-book under one arm, his wife hanging on the other, and followed by a long brood of children.

They keep their old customs, costumes, and pomps, their wig and mace, sceptre and crown. The Middle Ages still lurk in the streets of London. The Knights of the Bath take oath to defend injured ladies; the gold-stick-in-waiting survives. They repeated the ceremonies of the eleventh century in the Coronation of Queen Victoria. A hereditary tenure is natural to them. Offices, farms, trades, and traditions descend so. Their leases run for a hundred and a thousand years. Terms of service and partnership are life-long, or are inherited. "Holdship has been with me," said Lord Eldon, "eight-and-twenty years, knows all my business and books." Antiquity of usage is sanction enough. Wordsworth says of the small freeholders of Westmoreland: "Many of these humble sons of the hills had a consciousness that the land which they tilled had for more than five hundred years been possessed by men of the same name and blood." The ship-carpenter in the public yards, my lord's gardener and porter, have been there for more than a hundred years, grandfather, father, and son.

The English power resides also in their dislike of change. They have difficulty in bringing their reason to act, and on all occasions use their memory first. As soon as they have rid themselves of some grievance and settled the better practice, they make haste to fix it as a finality, and never wish to hear of alteration more.

Every Englishman is an embryonic chancellor: his instinct is to search for a precedent. The favourite phrase of their law is: "A custom whereof the memory of man runneth not back to the contrary." The barons say, "*Nolumus Mutari*"; and the cockneys stifle the curiosity of the foreigner on the reason of any practice with "Lord, sir, it was always so." They hate innovation. Bacon told them, Time was the right reformer; Chatham, that "confidence was a plant of slow growth"; Canning, to "advance with the times"; and Wellington, that "habit was ten times nature." All their statesmen learn the irresistibility of the tide of custom, and have invented many fine phrases to cover this slowness of perception and prehensility of tail.

A sea-shell should be the crest of England, not only because it represents a power built on the waves, but also the hard finish of the men. The Englishman is finished like a cowry or a murex. After the spire and the spines are formed, or with the formation, a juice exudes and a hard enamel varnishes every part. The keeping of the proprieties is as indispensable as clean linen. No merit quite countervails the want of this, while this sometimes stands in lieu of all. "'Tis in bad taste," is the most formidable word an Englishman can pronounce. But this japan costs them dear. There is a prose in certain Englishmen which exceeds in wooden deadness all rivalry with other countrymen. There is a knell in the conceit and externality of their

voice which seems to say, *Leave all hope behind.* In this Gibraltar of propriety mediocrity gets intrenched and consolidated and founded in adamant. An Englishman of fashion is like one of those souvenirs, bound in gold vellum, enriched with delicate engravings on thick hot-pressed paper, fit for the hands of ladies and princes, but with nothing in it worth reading or remembering.

A severe decorum rules the court and the cottage. When Thalberg the pianist was one evening performing before the Queen at Windsor, in a private party, the Queen accompanied him with her voice. The circumstance took air, and all England shuddered from sea to sea. The indecorum was never repeated. Cold, repressive manners prevail. No enthusiasm is permitted except at the opera. They avoid everything marked. They require a tone of voice that excites no attention in the room. Sir Philip Sydney is one of the patron saints of England, of whom Wotton said: "His wit was the measure of congruity."

Pretension and vapouring are once for all distasteful. They keep to the other extreme of low tone in dress and manners. They avoid pretension and go right to the heart of the thing. They hate nonsense, sentimentalism, and high-flown expression; they use a studied plainness. Even Brummel, their fop, was marked by the severest simplicity in dress. They value themselves on the absence of everything theatrical in the public business, and on conciseness and going to the point in private affairs.

In an aristocratical country like England, not the Trial by Jury, but the dinner, is the capital institution. It is the mode of doing honour to a stranger, to invite him to eat—and has been for many hundred years. "And they think," says the Venetian traveller of 1500, "no greater honour can be conferred or received than to invite others to eat with them, or to be invited themselves, and they would sooner give five or six ducats to provide an entertainment for a person than a groat to assist him in any distress."[1] It is reserved to the end of the day, the family-hour being generally six in London, and, if any company is expected, one or two hours later. Every one dresses for dinner, in his own house or in another man's. The guests are expected to arrive within half an hour of the time fixed by card of invitation, and nothing but death or mutilation is permitted to detain them. The English dinner is precisely the model on which our own are constructed in the Atlantic cities. The company sit one or two hours before the ladies leave the table. The gentlemen remain over their wine an hour longer, and rejoin the ladies in the drawing-room and take coffee. The dress-dinner generates a talent of table-talk which reaches great perfection: the stories are so good that one is sure they must have been often told before to have got such happy turns. Hither come all manner of clever projects, bits of popular science, of practical invention, of miscellaneous humour; political, literary, and personal news; railroads, horses, diamonds, agriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, and wine.

English stories, *bon-mots*, and the recorded table-talk of their wits are as good as the best of the French. In America we are apt scholars, but have not yet attained the same perfection: for the range of nations from which London draws, and the steep contrasts of condition, create the picturesque in society, as broken country makes picturesque landscape; while our prevailing equality makes a prairie tameness: and secondly, because the usage of a dress-dinner every day at dark has a tendency to hive and produce to advantage everything good. Much attrition has worn every sentence into a bullet. Also one meets now and then with polished men who know everything, have tried everything, and can do everything, and are quite superior to letters and science. What could they not, if only they would?

[1] *Relation of England.* Printed by the Camden Society.

# WORSHIP

SOME of my friends have complained, when preceding papers were read, that we discussed Fate, Power, and Wealth on too low a platform; gave too much line to the evil spirit of the times; too many cakes to Cerberus; that we ran Cudworth's risk of making, by excess of candour, the argument of atheism so strong that he could not answer it. I have no fears of being forced in my own despite to play, as we say, the devil's attorney. I have no infirmity of faith; no belief that it is of much importance what I or any man may say: I am sure that a certain truth will be said through me, though I should be dumb, or though I should try to say the reverse. Nor do I fear scepticism for any good soul. A just thinker will allow full swing to his scepticism. I dip my pen in the blackest ink, because I am not afraid of falling into my inkpot. I have no sympathy with a poor man I knew, who, when suicides abounded, told me he dared not look at his razor. We are of different opinions at different hours, but we always may be said to be at heart on the side of truth.

I see not why we should give ourselves such sanctified airs. If the Divine Providence has hid from men neither disease nor deformity nor corrupt society, but has stated itself out in passions, in war, in trade, in the love of power and pleasure, in hunger and need, in tyrannies, literatures, and arts—let us not be so nice that we cannot write these facts down coarsely as they stand, or doubt but there is a counter-statement as ponderous, which we can arrive at, and which, being put, will make all square. The solar system has no anxiety about its reputation, and the credit of truth and honesty is as safe; nor have I any fear that a sceptical bias can be given by leaning hard on the sides of fate, of practical power, or of trade, which the doctrine of Faith cannot down-weigh. The strength of that principle is not measured in ounces and pounds; it tyrannises at the centre of Nature. We may well give scepticism as much line as we can. The spirit will return and fill us. It drives the drivers. It counterbalances any accumulations of power:—

"Heaven kindly gave our blood a moral flow."

We are born loyal. The whole creation is made of hooks and eyes, of bitumen, of sticking-plaster; and whether your community is made in Jerusalem or in California, of saints or of wreckers, it coheres in a perfect ball. Men as naturally make a State, or a Church, as caterpillars a web. If they were more refined, it would be less formal, it would be nervous, like that of the Shakers, who, from long habit of thinking and feeling together, it is said, are affected in the same way, at the same time, to work and to play; and as they go with perfect sympathy to their tasks in the field or shop, so are they inclined for a ride or a journey at the same instant, and the horses come up with the family carriage unbespoken to the door.

We are born believing. A man bears beliefs as a tree bears apples. A self-poise belongs to every particle, and a rectitude to every mind, and is the Nemesis and protector of every Society. I and my neighbours have been bred in the notion that unless we came soon to some good Church—Calvinism, or Behmenism, or Romanism, or Mormonism—there would be a universal thaw and dissolution. No Isaiah or Jeremy has arrived. Nothing can exceed the anarchy that has followed in our skies. The stern old faiths have all pulverised. 'Tis a whole population of gentlemen and ladies out in search of

religions. 'Tis as flat anarchy in our ecclesiastic realms as that which existed in Massachusetts in the Revolution, or which prevails now on the slope of the Rocky Mountains or Pike's Peak. Yet we make shift to live. Men are loyal. Nature has self-poise in all her works; certain proportions in which oxygen and azote combine, and not less a harmony in faculties, a fitness in the spring and the regulator. The decline of the influence of Calvin, or Fénelon, or Wesley, or Channing, need give us no uneasiness. The builder of heaven has not so ill-constructed his creature as that the religion—that is, the public nature—should fall out: the public and the private element, like north and south, like inside and outside, like centrifugal and centripetal, adhere to every soul, and cannot be subdued except the soul is dissipated. God builds his temple in the heart on the ruins of churches and religions.

The whole state of man is a state of culture; and its flowering and completion may be described as Religion, or Worship. There is always some religion, some hope and fear extended into the invisible—from the blind boding which nails a horseshoe to the mast or the threshold, up to the song of the Elders in the Apocalypse. But the religion cannot rise above the state of the votary. Heaven always bears some proportion to earth. The god of the cannibals will be a cannibal, of the crusaders a crusader, and of the merchants a merchant. In all ages souls out of time, extraordinary, prophetic, are born, who are rather related to the system of the world than to their particular age and locality. These announce absolute truths, which, with whatever reverence received, are speedily dragged down into a savage interpretation. The interior tribes of our Indians and some of the Pacific islanders flog their gods when things take an unfavourable turn. The Greek poets did not hesitate to let loose their petulant wit on their deities also. Laomedon, in his anger at Neptune and Apollo, who had built Troy for him and demanded their price, does not hesitate to menace them that he will cut their ears off.[1] Among our Norse forefathers, King Olaf's mode of converting Eyvind to Christianity was to put a pan of glowing coals on his belly, which burst asunder. "Wilt thou now, Eyvind, believe in Christ?" asks Olaf, in excellent faith. Another argument was an adder put into the mouth of the reluctant disciple Rand, who refused to believe.

Christianity, in the romantic ages, signified European culture—the grafted or meliorated tree in a crab forest. And to marry a pagan wife or husband was to marry Beast, and voluntarily to take a step backwards towards the baboon:—

> "Hengist had verament
> A daughter both fair and gent,
> But she was heathen Sarazine,
> And Vortigern for love fine
> Her took to fere and to wife,
> And was cursed in all his life;
> For he let Christian wed heathen,
> And mixed our blood as flesh and mathen."[2]

What Gothic mixtures the Christian creed drew from the pagan sources, Richard of Devizes, chronicle of Richard I.'s crusade, in the twelfth century, may show. King Richard taunts God with forsaking him: "O fie! O how unwilling should I be to forsake thee, in so forlorn and dreadful a position, were I thy lord and advocate, as thou art mine. In sooth, my standards will in future be despised, not through my fault, but through thine: in sooth, not through any cowardice of my warfare art thou thyself, my king and my God, conquered this day, and not Richard thy vassal." The religion of the early English poets is anomalous, so devout and so blasphemous, in the same breath. Such is Chaucer's extraordinary confusion of heaven and earth in the picture of Dido:—

> "She was so fair,
> So young, so lusty, with her eyen glad,
> That if that God that heaven and earthe made
> Would have a love for beauty and goodness,
> And womanhede, truth, and seemliness,
> Whom should he loven but this lady sweet?
> There n' is no woman to him half so meet."

[1] *Iliad*, Book xxi. l. 455.
[2] Moths or worms.

With these grossnesses we complacently compare our own taste and decorum. We think and speak with more temperance and gradation—but is not indifferentism as bad as superstition?

We live in a transition period, when the old faiths which comforted nations, and not only so but made nations, seem to have spent their force. I do not find the religions of men at this moment very creditable to them, but either childish and insignificant or unmanly and effeminating. The fatal trait is the divorce between religion and morality. Here are know-nothing religions, or Churches that proscribe intellect; scortatory religions; slave-holding and slave-trading religions; and, even in the decent populations, idolatries wherein the whiteness of the ritual covers scarlet indulgence. The lover of the old religion complains that our contemporaries, scholars as well as merchants, succumb to a great despair—have corrupted into a timorous conservatism and believe in nothing. In our large cities the population is godless, materialised—no bond, no fellow-feeling, no enthusiasm. These are not men, but hungers, thirsts, fevers, and appetites walking. How is it people manage to live on, so aimless as they are? After their pepper-corn aims are gained, it seems as if the lime in their bones alone held them together, and not any worthy purpose. There is no faith in the intellectual, none in the moral universe. There is faith in chemistry, in meat and wine, in wealth, in machinery, in the steam-engine, galvanic battery, turbine-wheels, sewing-machines, and in public opinion, but not in divine causes. A silent revolution has loosed the tension of the old religious sects, and, in place of the gravity and permanence of those societies of opinion, they run into freak and extravagance. In creeds never was such levity; witness the heathenisms in Christianity, the periodic "revivals," the Millennium mathematics, the peacock ritualism, the retrogression to Popery, the maundering of Mormons, the squalor of Mesmerism, the deliration of rappings, the rat and mouse revelation, thumps in table-drawers, and black art. The architecture, the music, the prayer, partake of the madness; the arts sink into shift and make-believe. Not knowing what to do, we ape our ancestors; the Churches stagger backward to the mummeries of the Dark Ages. By the irresistible maturing of the general mind, the Christian traditions have lost their hold. The dogma of the mystic offices of Christ being dropped, and he standing on his genius as a moral teacher, it is impossible to maintain the old emphasis of his personality; and it recedes, as all persons must, before the sublimity of the moral laws. From this change, and in the momentary absence of any religious genius that could offset the immense material activity, there is a feeling that religion is gone. When Paul Leroux offered his article "Dieu" to the conductor of a leading French journal, he replied, "*La question de Dieu manque d'actualité.*" In Italy Mr. Gladstone said of the late King of Naples: "It has been a proverb that he has erected the negation of God into a system of government." In this country the like stupefaction was in the air, and the phrase "higher law" became a political gibe. What proof of infidelity like the toleration and propagandism of slavery? What, like the direction of education? What, like the facility of conversion? What, like the externality of Churches that once sucked the roots of right and wrong, and now have perished away till they are a speck of whitewash on the wall? What proof of scepticism like the base rate at which the highest mental and moral gifts are held? Let a man attain the highest and broadest culture that any American has possessed, then let him die by sea-storm, railroad collision, or other accident, and all America will acquiesce that the best thing has happened to him; that, after the education has gone far, such is the expensiveness of America that the best use to put a fine person to is to drown him to save his board.

Another scar of this scepticism is the distrust in human virtue. It is believed by well-dressed proprietors that there is no more virtue than they possess; that the solid portion of society exist for the arts of comfort; that life is an affair to put somewhat between the upper and lower mandibles. How prompt the suggestion of a low motive! Certain patriots in England devoted themselves for years to creating a public opinion that should break down the corn laws and establish free trade. "Well," says the man in the street, "Cobden got a stipend out of it." Kossuth fled hither across the ocean to try if he could rouse the New World to a sympathy with European liberty. "Aye," says New York, "he made a handsome thing of it, enough to make him comfortable for life."

See what allowance vice finds in the respectable and well-conditioned class. If a pickpocket intrude into the society of gentlemen, they exert what moral force they have, and he finds himself uncomfortable and glad to get away. But if an adventurer go through all the forms, procure himself to be elected to a post of trust, as of senator or president, though by the same arts as we detest in the house-thief—the same gentlemen who agree to discountenance the private rogue will be forward to show civilities and marks of respect to the public one; and no amount of evidence of his crimes will prevent them giving him ovations, complimentary dinners, opening their own houses to him, and priding themselves on his acquaintance. We were not deceived by the professions of the private adventurer—the louder he talked of his honour, the faster we counted our spoons; but we appeal to the sanctified preamble of the messages and proclamations of the public sinner, as the proof of sincerity. It must be that they who pay this homage have said to themselves, On the whole, we don't know about this that you call honesty; a bird in the hand is better.

Even well-disposed, good sort of people are touched with the same infidelity, and, for brave, straightforward action, use half-measures and compromises. Forgetful that a little measure is a great error, forgetful that a wise mechanic uses a sharp tool, they go on choosing the dead men of routine. But the official men can in nowise help you in any question of to-day, they deriving entirely from the old dead things. Only those can help in counsel or conduct who did not make a party pledge to defend this or that, but who were appointed by God Almighty, before they came into the world, to stand for this which they uphold.

It has been charged that a want of sincerity in the leading men is a vice general throughout American society. But the multitude of the sick shall not make us deny the existence of health. In spite of our imbecility and terrors, and "universal decay of religion," etc., the moral sense reappears to-day with the same morning newness that has been from of old the fountain of beauty and strength. You say there is no religion now. 'Tis like saying in rainy weather, There is no sun, when at that moment we are witnessing one of his superlative effects. The religion of the cultivated class now, to be sure, consists in an avoidance of acts and engagements which it was once their religion to assume. But this avoidance will yield spontaneous forms in their due hour. There is a principle which is the basis of things, which all speech aims to say, and all action to evolve, a simple, quiet, undescribed, undescribable presence, dwelling very peacefully in us, our rightful lord: we are not to do, but to let do; not to work, but to be worked upon; and to this homage there is a consent of all thoughtful and just men in all ages and conditions. To this sentiment belong vast and sudden enlargements of power. 'Tis remarkable that our faith in ecstasy consists with total inexperience of it. It is the order of the world to educate with accuracy the senses and the understanding; and the enginery at work to draw out these powers in priority, no doubt has its office. But we are never

without a hint that these powers are mediate and servile, and that we are one day to deal with real being—essences with essences. Even the fury of material activity has some results friendly to moral health. The energetic action of the times developes individualism, and the religious appear isolated. I esteem this a step in the right direction. Heaven deals with us on no representative system. Souls are not saved in bundles. The Spirit saith to the man: "How is it with thee? thee personally? is it well? is it ill?" For a great nature it is a happiness to escape a religious training—religion of character is so apt to be invaded. Religion must always be a crab fruit; it cannot be grafted and keep its wild beauty. "I have seen," said a traveller who had known the extremes of society, "I have seen human nature in all its forms; it is everywhere the same, but the wilder it is, the more virtuous."

We say the old forms of religion decay, and that a scepticism devastates the community. I do not think it can be cured or stayed by any modification of theologic creeds, much less by theologic discipline. The cure for false theology is mother-wit. Forget your books and traditions, and obey your moral perceptions at this hour. That which is signified by the words "moral" and "spiritual" is a lasting essence, and, with whatever illusions we have loaded them, will certainly bring back the words, age after age, to their ancient meaning. I know no words that mean so much. In our definitions we grope after the *spiritual* by describing it as invisible. The true meaning of *spiritual* is *real;* that law which executes itself, which works without means, and which cannot be conceived as not existing. Men talk of "mere morality"—which is much as if one should say, "Poor God, with nobody to help him." I find the omnipresence and the almightiness in the reaction of every atom in Nature. I can best indicate by examples those reactions by which every part of Nature replies to the purpose of the actor—beneficently to the good, penally to the bad. Let us replace sentimentalism by realism, and dare to uncover those terrible laws which, be they simple and seen or unseen, pervade and govern.

Every man takes care that his neighbour shall not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he do not cheat his neighbour. Then all goes well. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun. What a day dawns when we have taken to heart the doctrine of faith! to prefer, as a better investment, being to doing; being to seeming; logic to rhythm and to display; the year to the day; the life to the year; character to performance; and have come to know that justice will be done us; and if our genius is slow, the term will be long.

It is certain that worship stands in some commanding relation to the health of man and to his highest powers, so as to be in some manner the source of intellect. All the great ages have been ages of belief. I mean, when there was any extraordinary power of performance, when great national movements began, when arts appeared, when heroes existed, when poems were made—the human soul was in earnest, and had fixed its thoughts on spiritual verities with as strict a grasp as that of the hands on the sword, or the pencil, or the trowel. It is true that genius takes its rise out of the mountains of rectitude; that all beauty and power which men covet are somehow born out of that Alpine district; that any extraordinary degree of beauty in man or woman involves a moral charm. Thus I think we very slowly admit in another man a higher degree of moral sentiment than our own—a finer conscience, more impressionable or which marks minuter degrees; an ear to hear acuter notes of right and wrong than we can. I think we listen suspiciously and very slowly to any evidence to that point. But, once satisfied of such superiority, we set no limit to our expectation of his genius. For such persons are nearer to the secret of God

than others; are bathed by sweeter waters; they hear notices, they see visions, where others are vacant. We believe that holiness confers a certain insight, because not by our private, but by our public force can we share and know the nature of things.

There is an intimate interdependence of intellect and morals. Given the equality of two intellects—which will form the most reliable judgments, the good or the bad-hearted? "The heart has its arguments, with which the understanding is not acquainted.". For the heart is at once aware of the state of health or disease, which is the controlling state—that is, of sanity or of insanity; prior of course to all question of the ingenuity of arguments, the amount of facts, or the elegance of rhetoric. So intimate is this alliance of mind and heart that talent uniformly sinks with character. The bias of errors of principle carries away men into perilous courses as soon as their will does not control their passion or talent. Hence the extraordinary blunders and final wrong head into which men spoiled by ambition usually fall. Hence the remedy for all blunders, the cure of blindness, the cure of crime, is love. "As much love, so much mind," said the Latin proverb. The superiority that has no superior; the redeemer and instructor of souls, as it is their primal essence, is love.

The moral must be the measure of health. If your eye is on the eternal, your intellect will grow, and your opinions and actions will have a beauty which no learning or combined advantages of other men can rival. The moment of your loss of faith and acceptance of the lucrative standard will be marked in the pause or solstice of genius, the sequent retrogression, and the inevitable loss of attraction to other minds. The vulgar are sensible of the change in you, and of your descent, though they clap you on the back and congratulate you on your increased common-sense.

Our recent culture has been in natural science. We have learned the manners of the sun and of the moon, of the rivers and the rain, of the mineral and elemental kingdoms, of plants and animals. Man has learned to weigh the sun, and its weight neither loses nor gains. The path of a star, the moment of an eclipse, can be determined to the fraction of a second. Well, to him the book of history, the book of love, the lures of passion and the commandments of duty, are opened; and the next lesson taught is the continuation of the inflexible law of matter into the subtile kingdom of will and of thought; that if in sidereal ages gravity and projection keep their craft, and the ball never loses its way in its wild path through space—a secreter gravitation, a secreter projection rule not less tyrannically in human history, and keep the balance of power from age to age unbroken. For though the new element of freedom and an individual has been admitted, yet the primordial atoms are prefigured and predetermined to moral issues, are in search of justice, and ultimate right is done. Religion or worship is the attitude of those who see this unity, intimacy, and sincerity; who see that against all appearances the nature of things works for truth and right for ever.

It is a short sight to limit our faith in laws to those of gravity, of chemistry, of botany, and so forth. Those laws do not stop where our eyes lose them, but push the same geometry and chemistry up into the invisible plane of social and rational life, so that, look where we will, in a boy's game or in the strifes of races, a perfect reaction, a perpetual judgment, keeps watch and ward. And this appears in a class of facts which concerns all men, within and above their creeds.

Shallow men believe in luck, believe in circumstances: it was somebody's name, or he happened to be there at the time, or it was so then, and another day it would have been otherwise. Strong men believe in cause and effect. The man was born to do it, and his father was born to be the father of him and of

his deed; and by looking narrowly you shall see there was no luck in the matter; but it was all a problem in arithmetic, or an experiment in chemistry. The curve of the flight of the moth is preordained, and all things go by number, rule, and weight.

Scepticism is unbelief in cause and effect. A man does not see that as he eats, so he thinks; as he deals, so he is, and so he appears; he does not see that his son is the son of his thoughts and of his actions; that fortunes are not exceptions, but fruits; that relation and connection are not somewhere and sometimes, but everywhere and always; no miscellany, no exemption, no anomaly—but method, and an even web; and what comes out, that was put it. As we are, so we do; and as we do, so is it done to us; we are the builders of our fortunes; cant and lying and the attempt to secure a good which does not belong to us are, once for all, balked and vain. But in the human mind this tie of fate is made alive. The law is the basis of the human mind. In us it is inspiration; out there in Nature we see its fatal strength. We call it the moral sentiment.

We owe to the Hindoo Scriptures a definition of Law which compares well with any in our Western books. "Law it is, which is without name, or colour, or hands, or feet; which is smallest of the least, and largest of the large; all, and knowing all things; which hears without ears, sees without eyes, moves without feet, and seizes without hands."

If any reader tax me with using vague and traditional phrases, let me suggest to him by a few examples what kind of a trust this is, and how real. Let me show him that the dice are loaded; that the colours are fast, because they are the native colours of the fleece; that the globe is a battery, because every atom is a magnet; and that the police and sincerity of the universe are secured by God's delegating his divinity to every particle; that there is no room for hypocrisy, no margin for choice.

The countryman leaving his native village for the first time and going abroad finds all his habits broken up. In a new nation and language his sect, as Quaker or Lutheran, is lost. What! it is not, then, necessary to the order and existence of society? He misses this, and the commanding eye of his neighbourhood, which held him to decorum. This is the peril of New York, of New Orleans, of London, of Paris, to young men. But after a little experience he makes the discovery that there are no large cities—none large enough to hide in; that the censors of action are as numerous and as near in Paris as in Littleton or Portland; that the gossip is as prompt and vengeful. There is no concealment, and for each offence a several vengeance; that reaction, or *nothing for nothing*, or *things are as broad as they are long*, is not a rule for Littleton or Portland, but for the Universe.

We cannot spare the coarsest muniment of virtue. We are disgusted by gossip, yet it is of importance to keep the angels in their proprieties. The smallest fly will draw blood, and gossip is a weapon impossible to exclude from the privatest, highest, selectest. Nature created a police of many ranks. God has delegated himself to a million deputies. From these low external penalties the scale ascends. Next come the resentments, the fears, which injustice calls out; then the false relations in which the offender is put to other men; and the reaction of his fault on himself, in the solitude and devastation of his mind.

You cannot hide any secret. If the artist succour his flagging spirits by opium or wine, his work will characterise itself as the effect of opium or wine. If you make a picture or a statue, it sets the beholder in that state of mind you had when you made it. If you spend for show, on building, or gardening, or on pictures, or on equipages, it will so appear. We are all physiognomists and penetrators of character, and things themselves are detective. If you follow the suburban fashion

in building a sumptuous-looking house for a little money, it will appear to all eyes as a cheap dear house. There is no privacy that cannot be penetrated. No secret can be kept in the civilised world. Society is a masked ball, where everyone hides his real character, and reveals it by hiding. If a man wish to conceal anything he carries, those whom he meets know that he conceals somewhat, and usually know what he conceals. Is it otherwise if there be some belief or some purpose he would bury in his breast? 'Tis as hard to hide as fire. He is a strong man who can hold down his opinion. A man cannot utter two or three sentences without disclosing to intelligent ears precisely where he stands in life and thought—namely, whether in the kingdom of the senses and the understanding, or in that of ideas and imagination, in the realm of intuitions and duty. People seem not to see that their opinion of the world is also a confession of character. We can only see what we are, and if we misbehave we suspect others. The fame of Shakespeare or of Voltaire, of Thomas à Kempis or of Bonaparte, characterises those who give it. As gas-light is found to be the best nocturnal police, so the universe protects itself by pitiless publicity.

Each must be armed—not necessarily with musket and pike. Happy if, seeing these, he can feel that he has better muskets and pikes in his energy and constancy. To every creature is his own weapon, however skilfully concealed from himself, a good while. His work is sword and shield. Let him accuse none, let him injure none. The way to mend the bad world is to create the right world. Here is a low political economy plotting to cut the throat of foreign competition and establish our own; excluding others by force, or making war on them; or by cunning tariffs giving preference to worse wares of ours. But the real and lasting victories are those of peace, and not of war. The way to conquer the foreign artisan is, not to kill him, but to beat his work. And the Crystal Palaces and World Fairs, with their committees and prizes on all kinds of industry, are the result of this feeling. The American workman who strikes ten blows with his hammer, while the foreign workman only strikes one, is as really vanquishing that foreigner as if the blows were aimed at and told on his person. I look on that man as happy who, when there is question of success, looks into his work for a reply, not into the market, not into opinion, not into patronage. In every variety of human employment, in the mechanical and in the fine arts, in navigation, in farming, in legislating, there are, among the numbers who do their task perfunctorily, as we say, or just to pass, and as badly as they dare—there are the working-men, on whom the burden of the business falls; those who love work, and love to see it rightly done; who finish their task for its own sake; and the State and the world is happy that has the most of such finishers. The world will always do justice at last to such finishers; it cannot otherwise. He who has acquired the ability may wait securely the occasion of making it felt and appreciated, and know that it will not loiter. Men talk as if victory were something fortunate. Work is victory. Wherever work is done, victory is obtained. There is no chance, and no blanks. You want but one verdict; if you have your own, you are secure of the rest. And yet, if witnesses are wanted, witnesses are near. There was never a man born so wise or good but one or more companions came into the world with him, who delight in his faculty and report it. I cannot see without awe that no man thinks alone and no man acts alone, but the divine assessors who came up with him into life—now under one disguise, now under another, like a police in citizens' clothes—walk with him, step for step, through all the kingdom of time.

This reaction, this sincerity, is the property of all things. To make our word or act sublime, we must make it real. It

is our system that counts, not the single word or unsupported action. Use what language you will, you can never say anything but what you are. What I am and what I think is conveyed to you, in spite of my efforts to hold it back. What I am has been secretly conveyed from me to another while I was vainly making up my mind to tell him it. He has heard from me what I never spoke.

As men get on in life, they acquire a love for sincerity, and somewhat less solicitude to be lulled or amused. In the progress of the character there is an increasing faith in the moral sentiment and a decreasing faith in propositions. Young people admire talents and particular excellences. As we grow older we value total powers and effects, as the spirit or quality of the man. We have another sight and a new standard; an insight which disregards what is done *for* the eye and pierces to the doer; an ear which hears not what men say, but hears what they do not say.

There was a wise, devout man who is called in the Catholic Church St. Philip Neri, of whom many anecdotes touching his discernment and benevolence are told at Naples and Rome. Among the nuns in a convent not far from Rome, one had appeared who laid claim to certain rare gifts of inspiration and prophecy, and the abbess advised the Holy Father at Rome of the wonderful powers shown by her novice. The Pope did not well know what to make of these new claims, and Philip coming in from a journey one day, he consulted him. Philip undertook to visit the nun and ascertain her character. He threw himself on his mule, all travel-soiled as he was, and hastened through the mud and mire to the distant convent. He told the abbess the wishes of his Holiness, and begged her to summon the nun without delay. The nun was sent for, and, as soon as she came into the apartment, Philip stretched out his leg, all bespattered with mud, and desired her to draw off his boots. The young nun, who had become the object of much attention and respect, drew back with anger, and refused the office. Philip ran out of doors, mounted his mule, and returned instantly to the Pope. "Give yourself no uneasiness, Holy Father, any longer: here is no miracle, for here is no humility."

We need not much mind what people please to say, but what they must say; what their natures say, though their busy, artful, Yankee understandings try to hold back and choke that word and to articulate something different. If we will sit quietly, what they ought to say is said, with their will or against their will. We do not care for you, let us pretend what we may—we are always looking through you to the dim dictator behind you. While your habit or whim chatters, we civilly and impatiently wait until that wise superior shall speak again. Even children are not deceived by the false reasons which their parents give in answer to their questions, whether touching natural facts, or religion, or persons. When the parent, instead of thinking how it really is, puts them off with a traditional or a hypocritical answer, the children perceive that it is traditional or hypocritical. To a sound constitution the defect of another is at once manifest; and the marks of it are only concealed from us by our own dislocation. An anatomical observer remarks that the sympathies of the chest, abdomen, and pelvis tell at last on the face, and on all its features. Not only does our beauty waste, but it leaves word how it went to waste. Physiognomy and phrenology are not new sciences, but declarations of the soul that it is aware of certain new sources of information. And now sciences of broader scope are starting up behind these. And so for ourselves it is really of little importance what blunders in statement we make, so only we make no wilful departures from the truth. How a man's truth comes to mind long after we have forgotten all his words! How it comes to us in silent hours, that truth is our only armour in all passages

of life and death! Wit is cheap, and anger is cheap; but if you cannot argue or explain yourself to the other party, cleave to the truth, against me against thee, and you gain a station from which you cannot be dislodged. The other party will forget the words that you spoke, but the part you took continues to plead for you.

Why should I hasten to solve every riddle which life offers me? I am well assured that the Questioner who brings me so many problems will bring the answers also in due time. Very rich, very potent, very cheerful Giver that he is, he shall have it all his own way, for me. Why should I give up my thought, because I cannot answer an objection to it? Consider only whether it remains in my life the same it was. That only which we have within can we see without. If we meet no gods, it is because we harbour none. If there is grandeur in you, you will find grandeur in porters and sweeps. He only is rightly immortal to whom all things are immortal. I have read somewhere that none is accomplished so long as any are incomplete; that the happiness of one cannot consist with the misery of any other.

The Buddhists say, "No seed will die": every seed will grow. Where is the service which can escape its remuneration? What is vulgar, and the essence of all vulgarity, but the avarice of reward? 'Tis the difference of artisan and artist, of talent and genius, of sinner and saint. The man whose eyes are nailed, not on the nature of his act, but on the wages, whether it be money, or office, or fame, is almost equally low. He is great whose eyes are opened to see that the reward of actions cannot be escaped, because he is transformed into his action, and taketh its nature, which bears its own fruit, like every other tree. A great man cannot be hindered of the effect of his act, because it is immediate. The genius of life is friendly to the noble, and in the dark brings them friends from far. Fear God, and where you go men shall think they walk in hallowed cathedrals.

And so I look on those sentiments which make the glory of the human being—love, humility, faith—as being also the intimacy of Divinity in the atoms; and that, as soon as the man is right, assurances and previsions emanate from the interior of his body and his mind; as, when flowers reach their ripeness, incense exhales from them, and as a beautiful atmosphere is generated from the planet by the averaged emanations from all its rocks and soils.

Thus man is made equal to every event. He can face danger for the right. A poor, tender, painful body, he can run into flame or bullets or pestilence, with duty for his guide. He feels the insurance of a just employment. I am not afraid of accident as long as I am in my place. It is strange that superior persons should not feel that they have some better resistance against cholera than avoiding green peas and salads. Life is hardly respectable—is it? if it has no generous, guaranteeing task, no duties or affections that constitute a necessity of existing. Every man's task is his life-preserver. The conviction that his work is dear to God and cannot be spared defends him. The lightning-rod that disarms the cloud of its threat is his body in its duty. A high aim reacts on the means, on the days, on the organs of the body. A high aim is curative, as well as arnica. "Napoleon," says Goethe, "visited those sick of the plague, in order to prove that the man who could vanquish fear could vanquish the plague also; and he was right. It is incredible what force the will has in such cases: it penetrates the body and puts it in a state of activity which repels all hurtful influences; while fear invites them."

It is related of William of Orange that, while he was besieging a town on the continent, a gentleman sent to him on public business came to his camp, and, learning that the King was before the walls, he ventured to go where he was. He found him directing the operation of his gunners, and, having explained his errand and received his answer, the King

said: "Do you not know, sir, that every moment you spend here is at the risk of your life?" "I run no more risk," replied the gentleman, "than your Majesty." "Yes," said the King, "but my duty brings me here, and yours does not." In a few minutes a cannon-ball fell on the spot, and the gentleman was killed.

Thus can the faithful student reverse all the warnings of his early instinct, under the guidance of a deeper instinct. He learns to welcome misfortune, learns that adversity is the prosperity of the great. He learns the greatness of humility. He shall work in the dark, work against failure, pain, and ill-will. If he is insulted, he can be insulted; all his affair is not to insult. Hafiz writes:—

> "At the last day men shall wear
> On their heads the dust,
> As ensign and as ornament
> Of their lowly trust."

The moral equalises all; enriches, empowers all. It is the coin which buys all, and which all find in their pocket. Under the whip of the driver, the slave shall feel his equality with saints and heroes. In the greatest destitution and calamity it surprises man with a feeling of elasticity which makes nothing of loss.

I recall some traits of a remarkable person whose life and discourse betrayed many inspirations of this sentiment. Benedict was always great in the present time. He had hoarded nothing from the past, neither in his cabinets, neither in his memory. He had no designs on the future, neither for what he should do to men, nor for what men should do for him. He said: "I am never beaten until I know that I am beaten. I meet powerful, brutal people to whom I have no skill to reply. They think they have defeated me. It is so published in society, in the journals; I am defeated in this fashion, in all men's sight, perhaps on a dozen different lines. My ledger may show that I am in debt, cannot yet make my ends meet and vanquish the enemy so. My race may not be prospering; we are sick, ugly, obscure, unpopular. My children may be worsted. I seem to fail in my friends and clients, too. That is to say, in all the encounters that have yet chanced I have not been weaponed for that particular occasion, and have been historically beaten; and yet I know all the time that I have never been beaten; have never yet fought, shall certainly fight when my hour comes, and shall beat." "A man," says the Vishnu Sarma, "who, having well compared his own strength or weakness with that of others, after all doth not know the difference, is easily overcome by his enemies."

"I spent," he said, "ten months in the country. Thick-starred Orion was my only companion. Wherever a squirrel or a bee can go with security, I can go. I ate whatever was set before me; I touched ivy and dogwood. When I went abroad, I kept company with every man on the road, for I knew that my evil and my good did not come from these, but from the Spirit, whose servant I was. For I could not stoop to be a circumstance, as they did who put their life into their fortune and their company. I would not degrade myself by casting about in my memory for a thought, nor by waiting for one. If the thought come, I would give it entertainment. It should, as it ought, go into my hands and feet; but if it come not spontaneously, it comes not rightly at all. If it can spare me, I am sure I can spare it. It shall be the same with my friends. I will never woo the loveliest. I will not ask any friendship or favour. When I come to my own, we shall both know it. Nothing will be to be asked or to be granted." Benedict went out to seek his friend, and met him on the way; but he expressed no surprise at any coincidences. On the other hand, if he called at the door of his friend, and he was not at home, he did not go again, concluding that he had misinterpreted the intimations.

He had the whim not to make an apology to the same individual whom he had wronged. For this, he said, was a piece of personal vanity; but he would

correct his conduct, in that respect in which he had faulted, to the next person he should meet. Thus, he said, universal justice was satisfied.

Mira came to ask what she should do with the poor Genesee woman who had hired herself to work for her, at a shilling a day, and, now sickening, was like to be bedridden on her hands. Should she keep her, or should she dismiss her? But Benedict said: "Why ask? One thing will clear itself as the thing to be done, and not another, when the hour comes. Is it a question whether to put her into the street? Just as much whether to thrust the little Jenny on your arm into the street. The milk and meal you give the beggar will fatten Jenny. Thrust the woman out, and you thrust your babe out of doors, whether it so seem to you or not."

In the Shakers, so called, I find one piece of belief, in the doctrine which they faithfully hold that encourages them to open their doors to every wayfaring man who proposes to come among them; for, they say, the Spirit will presently manifest to the man himself and to the society what manner of person he is, and whether he belongs among them. They do not receive him, they do not reject him. And not in vain have they worn their clay coat, and drudged in their fields, and shuffled in their Bruin dance, from year to year, if they have truly learned thus much wisdom.

Honour him whose life is perpetual victory; him who, by sympathy with the invisible and real, finds support in labour, instead of praise; who does not shine, and would rather not. With eyes open, he makes the choice of virtue which outrages the virtuous; of religion which Churches stop their discords to burn and exterminate; for the highest virtue is always against the law.

Miracle comes to the miraculous, not to the arithmetician. Talent and success interest me but moderately. The great class, they who affect our imagination, the men who could not make their hands meet around their objects, the rapt, the lost, the fools of ideas—they suggest what they cannot execute. They speak to the ages, and are heard from afar. The Spirit does not love cripples and malformations. If there ever was a good man, be certain there was another, and will be more.

And so in relation to that future hour, that spectre clothed with beauty at our curtain by night, at our table by day—the apprehension, the assurance of a coming change. The race of mankind have always offered at least this implied thanks for the gift of existence—namely, the terror of its being taken away; the insatiable curiosity and appetite for its continuation. The whole revelation that is vouchsafed us is the gentle trust, which, in our experience, we find will cover also with flowers the slopes of this chasm.

Of immortality the soul, when well employed, is incurious. It is so well that it is sure it will be well. It asks no questions of the Supreme Power. The son of Antiochus asked his father when he would join battle. "Dost thou fear," replied the King, "that thou only in all the army wilt not hear the trumpet?" 'Tis a higher thing to confide that, if it is best we should live, we shall live—'tis higher to have this conviction than to have the lease of indefinite centuries and millenniums and æons. Higher than the question of our duration is the question of our deserving. Immortality will come to such as are fit for it, and he who would be a great soul in future must be a great soul now. It is a doctrine too great to rest on any legend—that is, on any man's experience but our own. It must be proved, if at all, from our own activity and designs, which imply an interminable future for their play.

What is called religion effeminates and demoralises. Such as you are, the gods themselves could not help you. Men are too often unfit to live, from their obvious inequality to their own necessities; or they suffer from politics, or bad neighbours, or from sickness, and they would gladly know that they were to be dismissed from the duties of life. But the

wise instinct asks: "How will death help them?" These are not dismissed when they die. You shall not wish for death out of pusillanimity. The weight of the universe is pressed down on the shoulders of each moral agent to hold him to his task. The only path of escape known in all the worlds of God is performance. You must do your work before you shall be released. And as far as it is a question of fact respecting the government of the universe, Marcus Antoninus summed the whole in a word: "It is pleasant to die if there be gods, and sad to live if there be none."

And so I think that the last lesson of life, the choral song which rises from all elements and all angels, is a voluntary obedience, a necessitated freedom. Man is made of the same atoms as the world is; he shares the same impressions, predispositions, and destiny. When his mind is illuminated, when his heart is kind, he throws himself joyfully into the sublime order, and does with knowledge what the stones do by structure.

The religion which is to guide and fulfil the present and coming ages, whatever else it be, must be intellectual. The scientific mind must have a faith which is science. "There are two things," said Mohammed, "which I abhor—the learned in his infidelities and the fool in his devotions." Our times are impatient of both, and specially of the last. Let us have nothing now which is not its own evidence. There is surely enough for the heart and imagination in the religion itself. Let us not be pestered with assertions and half-truths, with emotions and snuffle.

There will be a new Church founded on moral science; at first cold and naked, a babe in a manger again, the algebra and mathematics of ethical law, the Church of men to come, without shawms, or psaltery, or sackbut; but it will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters; science for symbol and illustration; it will fast enough gather beauty, music, picture, poetry. Was never stoicism so stern and exigent as this shall be. It shall send man home to his central solitude, shame these social, supplicating manners, and make him know that much of the time he must have himself to his friend. He shall expect no co-operation, he shall walk with no companion. The nameless Thought, the nameless Power, the superpersonal Heart—he shall repose alone on that. He needs only his own verdict. No good fame can help, no bad fame can hurt him. The Laws are his consolers, the good Laws themselves are alive; they know if he have kept them, they animate him with the leading of great duty and an endless horizon. Honour and fortune exist to him who always recognises the neighbourhood of the great—always feels himself in the presence of high causes.

# THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ETHICS[1]

SINCE the discovery of Oersted, that galvanism and electricity and magnetism are only forms of one and the same force, and convertible each into the other, we have continually suggested to us a larger generalisation: that each of the great departments of Nature—chemistry, vegetation, the animal life,—exhibits the same laws on a different plane: that the intellectual and moral worlds are analogous to the material. There is a kind of latent omniscience, not only in every man, but in every particle. That convertibility we so admire in plants and animal structures, whereby the repairs and the ulterior uses are subserved, when one part is wounded or deficient, by another; this self-help and self-creation proceed from the same original power which works remotely in grandest and meanest structures by the same design—works in a lobster or a mite-worm as a wise man would if imprisoned in that poor form. 'Tis the effort of God, of the Supreme Intellect, in the extremest frontier of his universe.

As this unity exists in the organisation of insect, beast, and bird, still ascending to man, and from lower type of man to the highest yet attained, so it does not less declare itself in the spirit or intelligence of the brute. In ignorant ages it was common to vaunt the human superiority by underrating the instinct of other animals; but a better discernment finds that the difference is only of less and more. Experiment shows that the bird and the dog reason as the hunter does, that all the animals show the same good sense in their humble walk that the man who is their enemy or friend does; and, if it be in smaller measure, yet it is not diminished, as his often is, by freak and folly. St. Pierre says of the animals that a moral sentiment seems to have determined their physical organisation.

I see the unity of thought and of morals running through all animated Nature; there is no difference of quality, but only of more and less. The animal who is wholly kept down in Nature has no anxieties. By yielding, as he must do, to it, he is enlarged and reaches his highest point. The poor grub, in the hole of a tree, by yielding itself to Nature, goes blameless through its low part and is rewarded at last, casts its filthy hull, expands into a beautiful form with rainbow wings, and makes a part of the summer day. The Greeks call it Psyche, a manifest emblem of the soul. The man down in Nature occupies himself in guarding, in feeding, in warming, and multiplying his body, and, as long as he knows no more, we justify him; but presently a mystic change is wrought, a new perception opens, and he is made a citizen of the world of souls; he feels what is called duty; he is aware that he owes a higher allegiance to do and live as a good member of this universe. In the measure in which he has this sense he is a man, rises to the universal life. The high intellect is absolutely at one with moral nature. A thought is embosomed in a sentiment, and the attempt to detach and blazon the thought is like a show of cut flowers. The moral is the measure of health, and in the voice of Genius I hear invariably the moral tone, even when it is disowned in words—health, melody, and a wider horizon belong to moral sensibility. The finer

[1] Reprinted from the *North American Rewiew*, of May, 1878, and reproduced here by permission of Messrs. G. Routledge & Sons, Limited.

the sense of justice, the better poet. The believer says to the sceptic:—

> "One avenue was shaded from thine eyes
> Through which I wandered to eternal truth."

Humility is the avenue. To be sure, we exaggerate when we represent these two elements as disunited; every man shares them both; but it is true that men generally are marked by a decided predominance of one or of the other element.

In youth and in age we are moralists, and in mature life the moral element steadily rises in the regard of all reasonable men.

'Tis a sort of proverbial dying speech of scholars (at least it is attributed to many) that which Anthony Wood reports of Nathaniel Carpenter, an Oxford Fellow. "It did repent him," he said, "that he had formerly so much courted the maid instead of the mistress" (meaning philosophy and mathematics to the neglect of divinity). This, in the language of our time, would be ethics.

And when I say that the world is made up of moral forces, these are not separate. All forces are found in Nature united with that which they move: heat is not separate, light is not massed aloof, nor electricity, nor gravity; but they are always in combination. And so moral powers: they are thirsts for action, and the more you accumulate the more they mould and form.

It is in the stomach of plants that development begins, and ends in the circles of the universe. 'Tis a long scale from the gorilla to the gentleman—from the gorilla to Plato, Newton, Shakespeare —to the sanctities of religion, the refinements of legislation, the summits of science, art, and poetry. The beginnings are slow and infirm, but it is an always accelerated march. The geologic world is chronicled by the growing ripeness of the strata from lower to higher, as it becomes the abode of more highly-organised plants and animals. The civil history of men might be traced by the successive meliorations as marked in higher moral generalisations—virtue meaning physical courage, then chastity and temperance, then justice and love—bargains of kings with peoples of certain rights to certain classes, then of rights to masses—then at last came the day when, as the historians rightly tell, the nerves of the world were electrified by the proclamation that all men are born free and equal.

Every truth leads in another. The bud extrudes the old leaf, and every truth brings that which will supplant it. In the court of law the judge sits over the culprit, but in the court of life, in the same hour, the judge also stands as culprit before a true tribunal. Every judge is a culprit, every law an abuse. Montaigne kills off bigots as cowhage kills worms; but there is a higher muse there sitting where he durst not soar, of eye so keen that it can report of a realm in which all the wit and learning of the Frenchman is no more than the cunning of a fox.

It is the same fact existing as sentiment and as will in the mind, which works in Nature as irresistible law, exerting influence over nations, intelligent beings, or down in the kingdoms of brute or of chemical atoms. Nature is a tropical swamp in sunshine, on whose purlieus we hear the song of summer birds, and see prismatic dew-drops; but her interiors are terrific, full of hydras and crocodiles. In the pre-Adamite she bred valour only; by-and-bye she gets on to man, and adds tenderness, and thus raises virtue piecemeal.

When we trace from the beginning, that ferocity has uses; only so are the conditions of the then world met, and these monsters are the scavengers, executioners, diggers, pioneers, and fertilisers, destroying what is more destructive than they, and making better life possible. We see the steady aim of Benefit in view from the first. Melioration is the law. The cruellest foe is a masked benefactor. The wars which make history so dreary have served the cause of truth and virtue. There is always an instinctive sense of

right, an obscure idea which animates either party, and which in long periods vindicates itself at last. Thus a sublime confidence is fed at the bottom of the heart that, in spite of appearances, in spite of malignity and blind self-interest living for the moment, an eternal, beneficent necessity is always bringing things right; and, though we should fold our arms—which we cannot do, for our duty requires us to be the very hands of this guiding sentiment, and work in the present moment—the evils we suffer will at last end themselves through the incessant opposition of Nature to everything hurtful.

The excellence of men consists in the completeness with which the lower system is taken up into the higher—a process of much time and delicacy, but in which no point of the lower should be left untranslated; so that the warfare of beasts should be renewed in a finer field, for more excellent victories. Savage war gives place to that of Turenne and Wellington, which has limitations and a code. This war again gives place to the finer quarrel of property, where the victory is wealth and the defeat poverty.

The inevitabilities are always sapping every seeming prosperity built on a wrong. No matter how you seem to fatten on a crime, that can never be good for the bee which is bad for the hive. See how these things look in the page of history. Nations come and go, cities rise and fall, all the instincts of man, good and bad, work, and every wish, appetite, and passion rushes into act and embodies itself in usages, protects itself with laws. Some of them are useful and universally acceptable, hinder none, help all, and these are honoured and perpetuated. Others are noxious. Community of property is tried, as when a Tartar horde or an Indian tribe roam over a vast tract for pasturage or hunting; but it is found at last that some establishment of property, allowing each on some distinct terms to fence and cultivate a piece of land, is best for all.

"For my part," said Napoleon, "it is not the mystery of the incarnation which I discover in religion, but the mystery of social order, which associates with heaven that idea of equality which prevents the rich from destroying the poor."

Shall I say, then, it were truer to see Necessity calm, beautiful, passionless, without a smile, covered with ensigns of woe, stretching her dark warp across the universe? These threads are Nature's pernicious elements, her deluges, miasma, disease, poison; her curdling cold, her hideous reptiles and worse men, cannibals, and the depravities of civilisation; the secrets of the prisons of tyranny, the slave and his master, the proud man's scorn, the orphan's tears, the vices of men, lust, cruelty, and pitiless avarice. These make the gloomy warp of ages. Humanity sits at the dread loom and throws the shuttle and fills it with joyful rainbows, until the sable ground is flowered all over with a woof of human industry and wisdom, virtuous examples, symbols of useful and generous arts, with beauty and pure love, courage, and the victories of the just and wise over malice and wrong.

Nature is not so helpless but it can rid itself at last of every crime. An Eastern poet, in describing the golden age, said that God had made justice so dear to the heart of Nature that, if any injustice lurked anywhere under the sky, the blue vault would shrivel to a snake-skin and cast it out by spasms. But the spasms of Nature are years and centuries, and it will tax the faith of man to wait so long.

Man is always throwing his praise or blame on events, and does not see that he only is real, and the world his mirror and echo. He imputes the stroke to fortune, which in reality himself strikes. The student discovers one day that he lives in enchantment: the house, the works, the persons, the days, the weathers —all that he calls Nature, all that he calls institutions, when once his mind is active, are visions merely, wonderful allegories, significant pictures of the laws of

the mind; and through this enchanted gallery he is led by unseen guides to read and learn the laws of Heaven. This discovery may come early—sometimes in the nursery, to a rare child; later in the school, but oftener when the mind is more mature; and to multitudes of men wanting in mental activity it never comes —any more than poetry or art. But it ought to come: it belongs to the human intellect, and is an insight which we cannot spare.

The idea of right exists in the human mind, and lays itself out in the equilibrium of Nature, in the equalities and periods of our system, in the level of seas, in the action and reaction of forces. Nothing is allowed to exceed or absorb the rest; if it do, it is disease, and is quickly destroyed. It was an early discovery of the mind—this beneficent rule. Strength enters just as much as the moral element prevails. The strength of the animal to eat and to be luxurious and to usurp is rudeness and imbecility. The law is: To each shall be rendered his own. As thou sowest, thou shalt reap. Smite, and thou shalt smart. Serve, and thou shalt be served. If you love and serve men, you cannot, by any hiding or stratagem, escape the remuneration. Secret retributions are always restoring the level, when disturbed, of the Divine justice. It is impossible to tilt the beam. All the tyrants and proprietors and monopolists of the world in vain set their shoulders to heave the bar. Settles for evermore the ponderous equator to its line, and man and mote and star and sun must range with it, or be pulverised by the recoil.

It is a doctrine of unspeakable comfort. He that plants his foot here passes at once out of the kingdom of illusions. Others may well suffer in the hideous picture of crime with which earth is filled and the life of society threatened; but the habit of respecting that great order which certainly contains and will dispose of our little system will take all fear from the heart. It did itself create and distribute all that is created and distributed, and, trusting to its power, we cease to care for what it will certainly order well. To good men, as we call good men, this doctrine of Trust is an unsounded secret. They use the word, they have accepted the notion of a mechanical supervision of human life, by which that certain wonderful being whom they call God does take up their affairs where their intelligence leaves them, and somehow knits and co-ordinates the issues of them in all that is beyond the reach of private faculty. They do not see that *He*, that *It*, is there, next and within; the thought of the thought; the affair of affairs; that he is existence, and take him from them and they would not be. They do not see that particulars are sacred to him, as well as the scope and outline; that these passages of daily life are his work; that, in the moment when they desist from interference, these particulars take sweetness and grandeur, and become the language of mighty principles.

A man should be a guest in his own house, and a guest in his own thought. He is there to speak for truth; but who is he? Some clod the truth has snatched from the ground, and with fire has fashioned to a momentary man. Without the truth, he is a clod again. Let him find his superiority in not wishing superiority; find the riches of love which possesses that which it adores; the riches of poverty; the height of lowliness, the immensity of to-day; and, in the passing hour, the age of ages. Wondrous state of man! never so happy as when he has lost all private interests and regards, and exists only in obedience and love of the Author.

The fiery soul said: "Let me be a blot on this fair world, the obscurest, the loneliest sufferer, with one proviso—that I know it is His agency. I will love him, though he shed frost and darkness on every way of mine." The emphasis of that blessed doctrine lay in lowliness. The new saint gloried in infirmities. Who or what was he? His rise and his recovery were vicarious. He has fallen in another; he rises in another.

We perish, and perish gladly, if the law remains. I hope it is conceivable that a man may go to ruin gladly, if he see that thereby no shade falls on that he loves and adores. We need not always be stipulating for our clean shirt and roast joint *per diem*. We do not believe the less in astronomy and vegetation because we are writhing and roaring in our beds with rheumatism. Cripples and invalids, we doubt not there are bounding fawns in the forest, and lilies with graceful, springing stem; so neither do we doubt or fail to love the eternal law, of which we are such shabby practisers. Truth gathers itself spotless and unhurt after all our surrenders and concealments and partisanship—never hurt by the treachery or ruin of its best defenders, whether Luther, or William Penn, or St. Paul. We answer, when they tell us of the bad behaviour of Luther or Paul: "Well, what if he did? Who was more pained than Luther or Paul?" Shall we attach ourselves violently to our teachers and historical personalities, and think the foundation shaken if any fault is shown in their record? But how is the truth hurt by their falling from it? The law of gravity is not hurt by every accident, though our leg be broken. No more is the law of justice by our departure from it.

We are to know that we are never without a pilot. When we know not how to steer, and dare not hoist a sail, we can drift. The current knows the way, though we do not. When the stars and sun appear, when we have conversed with navigators who know the coast, we may begin to put out an oar and trim a sail. The ship of heaven guides itself, and will not accept a wooden rudder.

Have you said to yourself ever: "I abdicate all choice; I see it is not for me to interfere. I see that I have been one of the crowd; that I have been a pitiful person, because I have wished to be my own master, and to dress and order my whole way and system of living. I thought I managed it very well. I see that my neighbours think so. I have heard prayers, I have prayed even, but I have never until now dreamed that this undertaking the entire management of my own affairs was not commendable. I have never seen, until now, that it dwarfed me. I have not discovered, until this blessed ray flashed just now through my soul, that there dwelt any power in Nature that would relieve me of my load. But now I see"?

What is this intoxicating sentiment that allies this scrap of dust to the whole of Nature and the whole of Fate—that makes this doll a dweller in ages, mocker at time, able to spurn all outward advantages, peer and master of the elements? I am taught by it that what touches any thread in the vast web of being touches me. I am representative of the whole; and the good of the whole, or what I call the right, makes me invulnerable.

How came this creation so magically woven that nothing can do me mischief but myself—that an invisible fence surrounds my being which screens me from all harm that I will to resist? If I will stand upright, the creation cannot bend me. But if I violate myself, if I commit a crime, the lightning loiters by the speed of retribution, and every act is not hereafter but instantaneously rewarded according to its quality. Virtue is the adopting of this dictate of the universal mind by the individual will. Character is the habit of this obedience, and Religion is the accompanying emotion, the emotion of reverence which the presence of the universal mind ever excites in the individual.

We go to famous books for our examples of character, just as we send to England for shrubs which grow as well in our own door-yards and cow-pastures. Life is always rich, and spontaneous graces and forces elevate it in every domestic circle, which are overlooked while we are reading something less excellent in old authors. From the obscurity and casualty of those which I know, I infer the obscurity and casualty of the like balm and consolation and immortality in a thousand homes which

I do not know, all round the world. And I see not why to these simple instincts, simple yet grand, all the heights and transcendencies of virtue and of enthusiasm are not open. There is power enough in them to move the world; and it is not any sterility or defect in ethics, but our negligence of these fine monitors, of these world-embracing sentiments, that makes religion cold and life low.

While the immense energy of the sentiment of duty and the awe of the supernatural exert incomparable influence on the mind—yet it is often perverted, and the tradition received with awe, but without correspondent action of the receiver. Then you find so many men infatuated on that topic! Wise on all other, they lose their head the moment they talk of religion. It is the sturdiest prejudice in the public mind that religion is something by itself; a department distinct from all other experiences, and to which the test and judgment men are ready enough to show on other things do not apply. You may sometimes talk with the gravest and best citizen, and the moment the topic of religion is broached, he runs into a childish superstition. His face looks infatuated, and his conversation is. When I talked with an ardent missionary, and pointed out to him that his creed found no support in my experience, he replied: "It is not so in your experience, but is so in the other world." I answer: Other world! there is no other world. God is one and omnipresent; here or nowhere is the whole fact. The one miracle which God works evermore is in Nature, and imparting himself to the mind. When we ask simply: "What is true in thought? what is just in action?" it is the yielding of the private heart to the Divine mind, and all personal preferences, and all requiring of wonders, are profane.

The word miracle, as it is used, only indicates the ignorance of the devotee, staring with wonder to see water turned into wine, and heedless of the stupendous fact of his own personality. Here he stands, a lonely thought harmoniously organised into correspondence with the universe of mind and matter. What narrative of wonders coming down from a thousand years ought to charm his attention like this? Certainly it is human to value a general consent, a fraternity of believers, a crowded church; but, as the sentiment purifies and rises, it leaves crowds. It makes Churches of two, Churches of one. A fatal disservice does this Swedenborg or other who offers to do my thinking for me. It seems as if, when the spirit of God speaks so plainly to each soul, it were an impiety to be listening to one or another saint. Jesus was better than others, because he refused to listen to others and listened at home.

You are really interested in your thought. You have meditated in silent wonder on your existence in this world. You have perceived in the first fact of your conscious life here a miracle so astounding—a miracle comprehending all the universe of miracles to which your intelligent life gives you access—as to exhaust wonder, and leave you no need of hunting here or there for any particular exhibitions of power. Then up comes a man with a text of 1 John v. 7, or a knotty sentence from St. Paul, which he considers as the axe at the root of your tree. You cannot bring yourself to care for it. You say: "Cut away; my tree is Ygdrasil—the tree of life." He interrupts for the moment your peaceful trust in the Divine Providence. Let him know by your security that your conviction is clear and sufficient, and, if he were Paul himself, you also are here, and with your Creator.

We all give way to superstitions. The house in which we were born is not quite mere timber and stone; is still haunted by parents and progenitors. The creeds into which we were initiated in childhood and youth no longer hold their old place in the minds of thoughtful men, but they are not nothing to us, and we hate to have them treated with contempt. There is so much that we

do not know, that we give to these suggestions the benefit of the doubt.

It is a necessity of the human mind that he who looks at one object should look away from all other objects. He may throw himself upon some sharp statement of one fact, some verbal creed, with such concentration as to hide the universe from him: but the stars roll above; the sun warms him. With patience and fidelity to truth he may work his way through, if only by coming against somebody who believes more fables than he does; and, in trying to dispel the illusions of his neighbour, he opens his own eyes.

In the Christianity of this country there is wide difference of opinion in regard to inspiration, prophecy, miracles, the future state of the soul; every variety of opinion, and rapid revolution in opinions, in the last half-century. It is simply impossible to read the old history of the first century as it was read in the ninth; to do so you must abolish in your mind the lessons of all the centuries from the ninth to the nineteenth.

Shall I make the mistake of baptising the daylight, and time, and space, by the name of John or Joshua, in whose tent I chance to behold daylight, and space, and time? What anthropomorphists we are in this that we cannot let moral distinctions be, but must mould them into human shape! "Mere morality" means—not put into a personal master of morals. Our religion is geographical, belongs to our time and place; respects and mythologises some one time and place and person and people. So it is occasional. It visits us only on some exceptional and ceremonial occasion, on a wedding or a baptism, on a sick-bed, or at a funeral, or perhaps on a sublime national victory or a peace. But that be sure is not the religion of the universal unsleeping providence, which lurks in trifles, in still, small voices, in the secrets of the heart and our closest thoughts, as efficiently as in our proclamations and successes.

Far be it from me to underrate the men or the Churches that have fixed the hearts of men and organised their devout impulses or oracles into good institutions. The Church of Rome had its saints, and inspired the conscience of Europe—St. Augustine, and Thomas à Kempis, and Fénelon; the piety of the English Church in Cranmer, and Herbert, and Taylor; the Reformed Church, Scougal; the mystics, Behmen and Swedenborg; the Quakers, Fox and James Naylor. I confess our later generation appears ungirt, frivolous, compared with the religions of the last or Calvinistic age. There was in the last century a serious habitual reference to the spiritual world, running through diaries, letters, and conversation—yes, and into wills and legal instruments also, compared with which our liberation looks a little foppish and dapper.

The religion of seventy years ago was an iron belt to the mind, giving it concentration and force. A rude people were kept respectable by the determination of thought on the eternal world. Now men fall abroad—want polarity—suffer in character and intellect. A sleep creeps over the great functions of man. Enthusiasm goes out. In its stead a low prudence seeks to hold society staunch, but its arms are too short; cordage and machinery never supply the place of life.

Luther would cut his hand off sooner than write theses against the Pope if he suspected that he was bringing on with all his might the pale negations of Boston Unitarianism. I will not now go into the metaphysics of that reaction by which in history a period of belief is followed by an age of criticism, in which wit takes the place of faith in the leading spirits, and an excessive respect for forms out of which the heart has departed becomes most obvious in the least religious minds. I will not now explore the causes of the result, but the fact must be conceded as of frequent recurrence, and never more evident than in our American Church. To a self-denying, ardent Church, delighting in rites and ordinances has

succeeded a cold, intellectual race, who analyse the prayer and psalm of their forefathers, and the more intellectual reject every yoke of authority and custom with a petulance unprecedented. It is a sort of mark of probity and sincerity to declare how little you believe, while the mass of the community indolently follow the old forms with childish scrupulosity, and we have punctuality for faith, and good taste for character.

But I hope the defect of faith with us is only apparent. We shall find that freedom has its own guards, and, as soon as in the vulgar it runs to licence, sets all reasonable men on exploring those guards. I do not think the summit of this age truly reached or expressed unless it attain the height which religion and philosophy reached in any former age. If I miss the inspiration of the saints of Calvinism, or of Platonism, or Buddhism, our times are not up to theirs, or, more truly, have not yet their own legitimate force.

Worship is the regard for what is above us. Men are respectable only as they respect. We delight in children because of that religious eye which belongs to them; because of their reverence for their seniors, and for their objects of belief. The poor Irish labourer one sees with respect, because he believes in something, in his Church, and in his employers. Superstitious persons we see with respect, because their whole existence is not bounded by their hats and their shoes, but they walk attended by pictures of the imagination, to which they pay homage. You cannot impoverish man by taking away these objects above him without ruin. It is very sad to see men who think their goodness made of themselves; it is very grateful to see those who hold an opinion the reverse of this.

All ages of belief have been great; all of unbelief have been mean. The Orientals believe in Fate. That which shall befall them is written on the iron leaf; they will not turn on their heel to avoid famine, plague, or the sword of the enemy. That is great, and gives a great air to the people. We in America are charged with a great deficiency in worship; that reverence does not belong to our character; that our institutions, our politics, and our trade have fostered a self-reliance which is small, lilliputian, full of fuss and bustle; we look at and will bear nothing above us in the State, and do exceedingly applaud and admire ourselves, and believe in our senses and understandings, while our imagination and our moral sentiment are desolated. In religion, too, we want objects above; we are fast losing or have already lost our old reverence; new views of inspiration, of miracles, of the saints, have supplanted the old opinions, and it is vain to bring them again. Revolutions never go backward, and in all Churches a certain decay of ancient piety is lamented, and all threatens to lapse into apathy and indifferentism. It becomes us to consider whether we cannot have a real faith and real objects in lieu of these false ones. The human mind, when it is trusted, is never false to itself. If there be sincerity and good meaning—if there be really in us the wish to seek for our superiors, for that which is lawfully above us, we shall not long look in vain.

Meantime there is great centrality, a centripetence equal to the centrifugence. The mystic or theist is never scared by any startling materialism. He knows the laws of gravitation and of repulsion are deaf to French talkers, be they never so witty. If theology shows that opinions are fast changing, it is not so with the convictions of men with regard to conduct. These remain. The most daring heroism, the most accomplished culture, or rapt holiness, never exhausted the claim of these lowly duties, never penetrated to their origin, or was able to look behind their source. We cannot disenchant, we cannot impoverish ourselves, by obedience; but by humility we rise, by obedience we command, by poverty we are rich, by dying we live.

We are thrown back on rectitude

forever and ever, only rectitude—to mend one; that is all we can do. But *that* the zealot stigmatises as a sterile chimney-corner philosophy. Now, the first position I make is that natural religion supplies still all the facts which are disguised under the dogma of popular creeds. The progress of religion is steadily to its identity with morals.

How is the new generation to be edified? How should it not? The life of those once omnipotent traditions was really not in the legend, but in the moral sentiment and the metaphysical fact which the legends enclosed—and these survive. A new Socrates, or Zeno, or Swedenborg, or Pascal, or a new crop of geniuses like those of the Elizabethan age, may be born in this age, and, with happy heart and a bias for theism, bring asceticism, duty, and magnanimity into vogue again.

It is true that Stoicism, always attractive to the intellectual and cultivated, has now no temples, no academy, no commanding Zeno or Antoninus. It accuses us that it has none, that pure ethics is not now formulated and concreted into a *cultus*, a fraternity with assemblings and holy-days, with song and book, with brick and stone. Why have not those who believe in it and love it left all for this, and dedicated themselves to write out its scientific scriptures to become its Vulgate for millions? I answer for one that the inspirations we catch of this law are not continuous and technical, but joyful sparkles, and are recorded for their beauty, for the delight they give, not for their obligation; and that is their priceless good to men, that they charm and uplift, not that they are imposed. It has not yet its first hymn. But, that every line and word may be coals of true fire, ages must roll, ere these casual wide-falling cinders can be gathered into broad and steady altar-flame.

It does not yet appear what forms the religious feeling will take. It prepares to rise out of all forms to an absolute justice and healthy perception. Here is now a new feeling of humanity infused into public action. Here is contribution of money on a more extended and systematic scale than ever before to repair public disasters at a distance, and of political support to oppressed parties. Then there are the new conventions of social science, before which the questions of the rights of women, the laws of trade, the treatment of crime, regulation of labour, come for a hearing. If these are tokens of the steady currents of thought and will in these directions, one might well anticipate a new nation.

I know how delicate this principle is—how difficult of adaptation to practical and social arrangements. It cannot be profaned; it cannot be forced; to draw it out of its natural current is to lose at once all its power. Such experiments as we recall are those in which some sect or dogma made the tie, and that was an artificial element which chilled and checked the union. But is it quite impossible to believe that men should be drawn to each other by the simple respect which each man feels for another in whom he discovers absolute honesty; the respect he feels for one who thinks life is quite too coarse and frivolous, and that he should like to lift it a little, should like to be the friend of some man's virtue? for another who, underneath his compliances with artificial society, would dearly like to serve somebody—to test his own reality by making himself useful and indispensable?

Man does not live by bread alone, but by faith, by admiration, by sympathy. 'Tis very shallow to say that cotton, or iron, or silver and gold, are kings of the world; there are rulers that will at any moment make these forgotten. Fear will. Love will. Character will. Men live by their credence. Governments stand by it—by the faith that the people share—whether it comes from the religion in which they were bred, or from an original conscience in themselves, which the popular religion echoes. If government could only stand by force, if the instinct of the people was to resist the government, it is plain the government

must be two to one in order to be secure, and then it would not be safe from desperate individuals. But no; the old commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," holds down New York, and London, and Paris, and not a police or horse-guards.

The credence of men it is that moulds them, and creates at will one or another surface. The mind as it opens transfers very fast its choice from the circumstance to the cause; from courtesy to love, from inventions to science, from London or Washington law, or public opinion, to the self-revealing idea; from all that talent executes to the sentiment that fills the heart and dictates the future of nations. The commanding fact, which I never do not see, is the sufficiency of the moral sentiment. We buttress it up, in shallow hours or ages, with legends, traditions, and forms, each good for the one moment in which it was a happy type or symbol of the Power, but the Power sends in the next moment a new lesson, which we lose while our eyes are reverted and striving to perpetuate the old.

America shall introduce a pure religion. Ethics are thought not to satisfy affection. But all the religion we have is the ethics of one or another holy person; as soon as character appears, be sure love will, and veneration, and anecdotes, and fables about him, and delight of good men and women in him. And what deeps of grandeur and beauty are known to us in ethical truth, what divination or insight belongs to it! For innocence is a wonderful electuary for purging the eyes to search the nature of those souls that pass before it. What armour it is to protect the good from outward or inward harm, and with what power it converts evil accidents into benefits; the power of its countenance; the power of its presence! To it alone comes true friendship; to it come grandeur of situation and poetic perception, enriching all it deals with.

Once men thought Spirit divine, and Matter diabolic; one Ormuzd, the other Ahriman. Now science and philosophy recognise the parallelism, the approximation, the unity of the two: how each reflects the other as face answers to face in a glass: nay, how the laws of both are one, or how one is the realisation. We are learning not to fear truth.

The man of this age must be matriculated in the university of sciences and tendencies flowing from all past periods. He must not be one who can be surprised and shipwrecked by every bold or subtile word which malignant and acute men may utter in his hearing, but should be taught all scepticisms and unbeliefs, and made the destroyer of all card-houses and paper walls, and the sifter of all opinions, by being put face to face from his infancy with Reality.

A man who has accustomed himself to look at all his circumstances as very mutable, to carry his possessions, his relations to persons, and even his opinions, in his hand, and in all these to pierce to the principle and moral law, and everywhere to find that—has put himself out of the reach of all scepticism; and it seems as if whatever is most affecting and sublime in our intercourse, in our happiness, and in our losses, tended steadily to uplift us to a life so extraordinary, and, one might say, superhuman.

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